



THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE SEA

J. KEENE CHATFIELD

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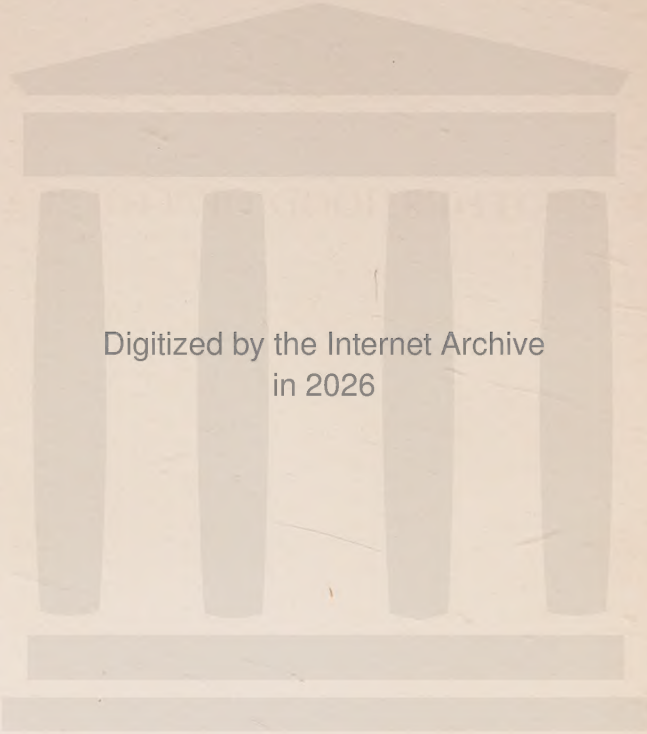
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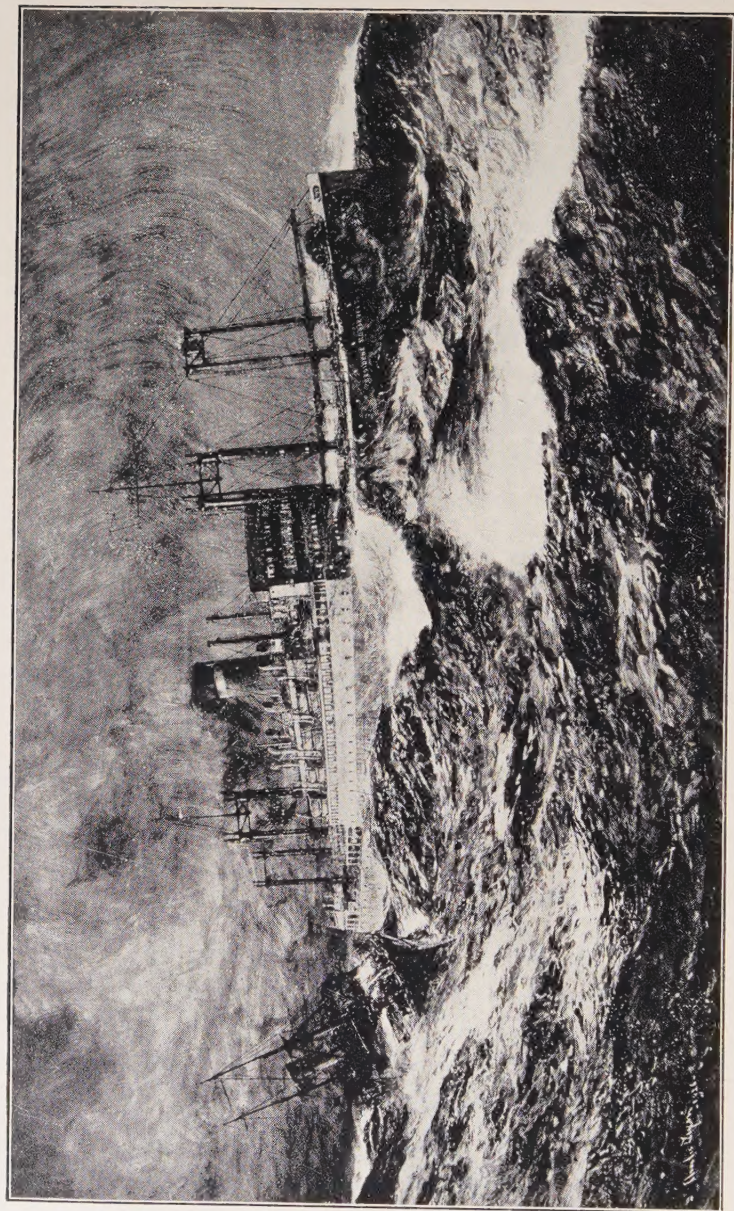
BOOKS ON THE SEA

By E. KEBLE CHATTERTON

SAILING SHIPS AND THEIR STORY
SHIPS AND WAYS OF OTHER DAYS
FORE AND AFT: THE STORY OF THE
FORE-AND-AFT RIG
STEAMSHIPS AND THEIR STORY
THE ROMANCE OF THE SHIP
THE STORY OF THE BRITISH NAVY
KING'S CUTTERS AND SMUGGLERS
THE ROMANCE OF PIRACY
THE OLD EAST INDIAMEN
Q-SHIPS AND THEIR STORY
THE MERCANTILE MARINE
THE ROMANCE OF SEA ROVERS
THE AUXILIARY PATROL
SHIP MODELS
SEAMEN ALL
STEAMSHIP MODELS
WHALERS AND WHALING
BATTLES BY SEA
THE SHIP UNDER SAIL
CHATS ON NAVAL PRINTS

CRUISES

DOWN CHANNEL IN THE "VIVETTE"
THROUGH HOLLAND IN THE "VIVETTE"



"THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE SEA"

S.S. "Pre-ident Roosevelt" standing by the ill-fated S.S. "Antinoo."
From the picture painted by Mr. Charles Dixon, R.I., in the possession of Mr. J. W. Dearden.
(See page 231)

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE SEA

BY
E. KEBLE CHATTERTON

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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1927

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TO
MY NEPHEW
ROBERT ERRINGTON GIBBS

PREFACE

FROM out-of-the-way places, from private diaries, personal conversations, first-hand knowledge and other sources of information, this story of great sea happenings has been written primarily in answer to requests following a short talk broadcast on the wireless from 2 LO, under the title "The Brotherhood of the Sea." But my aim in these pages has been to show what a glorious and beautiful thing this ocean comradeship has been from generation to generation in the height of gravest peril.

Especial emphasis has been laid on achievements in war and peace during the last two decades, which have seen the sailing ship practically banished before the advance of steam and motor craft ; and by comparison I have included incidents of that period which immediately preceded the advent of the mechanically-propelled vessels. The later nineteenth century has been dealt with in other volumes, but in the last twenty years shipping has altered so considerably and so rapidly that we forget how splendidly and heroically there still exists that historic spirit in the characters of men who take to sea these highly developed vessels. The dangers of seafaring are by no means banished by the advance of the scientist and engineer. And it is for this reason that one stresses with pride the same great gallantry and self-sacrifice of the modern sailor which have been handed down from the era of clippers.

Practically every kind of craft from the liner to the smallest boat comes into these pages. Liners, trawlers, freighters, tugs, fast motor boats, destroyers, submarines, open boats, rafts and some of the square-rigged ships themselves glide into our picture to show

PREFACE

that continuous and undying theme of co-operation at sea ; self-sacrifice and willing death when the great crises come. The thrills are real, not artificial : they are the result of amazing situations and equally exceptional solidarity on the part of the brotherhood. Some of these events are, indeed, so unusual that no novelist would dare to employ them. But those readers whose business is on great waters, who know the strange ways of a ship on the sea, and that large unused reserve of heroism in the sailor's character, will understand well enough that most of the best sea stories will never be published. I have been indebted to "The Fighting at Jutland," by Lieut.-Commander H. W. Fawcett, R.N., and Lieut. G. W. W. Hooper, R.N., as well as to the Official Despatches (Cmd. 1068), for certain details in connection with that battle.

I have to acknowledge the courtesy of the following for permission to reproduce certain illustrations : Commander H. L. Boyle, R.N., for the Jutland picture, which he made after having been present at that battle ; Mr Charles Dixon, R.I., the painter, and Mr J. W. Dearden, the owner, of the picture "The Brotherhood of the Sea" ; Captain H. P. Douglas, C.M.G., R.N., of the Hydrographic Department, Admiralty ; and H.M. Stationery Office for the reproduction of the Admiralty chart showing the Carthy Islands ; the Imperial War Museum for photographs of several war vessels and incidents ; Messrs John I. Thornycroft & Co., Ltd., for photographs of Kronstadt, C.M.B.'s and an M-class destroyer ; Messrs J. Samuel White & Co., Ltd., for the picture of H.M.S. *Broke* ; Messrs Yarrow & Co., Ltd., for that of H.M.S. *Firedrake* ; Messrs Smith's Dock Co., Ltd., for that of the trawlers ; and Messrs T. H. Parker, 12A Berkeley Street, W., for the loan of certain prints.

E. KEBLE CHATTERTON.

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COMMODORE ANSON'S "CENTURION"
Capturing the "Nuestra Señora de Cabadonga" in June, 1743.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE SEA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

EVERY now and again, when we hear of ships in trouble on the sea, we receive a very necessary reminder that, in spite of all our extraordinary progress in naval architecture, material construction, propulsion, navigational methods, safety devices and invention generally, these are relatively but minute entities compared with the great majesty of the sea. Sometimes man in the pride of his achievement is apt to imagine he and his productions can be a match for the powers of the ocean. He has brought into being steamships which, ignoring the laws of nature, go straight into the wind's eye reeling off knots by the score. He has laid out millions of pounds so to launch a vessel of such mammoth size that she can be steady in behaviour during the wildest gales, and able to transport a whole townful of people. He has endowed her with every conceivable thing that the sciences and arts can present. And then one day we hear that this ultra-perfect creature has been brought down from her vanity to her true level.

It may be that in her hurrying defiance of storms and angry seas the latter have risen in their wrath and swept away the bridge, ventilating shafts; burst through hatches, smashed in thick scuttles, hurled costly furni-

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ture from side to side, broken passengers' limbs, thrust seamen overboard, and compelled the presuming ship to ease her speed to dead slow in penance for her vain conceit. On other occasions the mighty powers of nature have seen fit to buffet a perfectly well-found steamer so that her cargo shifts, she becomes out of control, wallows beam-on to the terrible ocean crests, the green water comes pouring down into the engine-rooms, and in a matter of a few hours she is doomed, destined for Davy Jones' historic collection.

Another lesson in respect and humility has been taught by the severest of discipline.

Thus these incidents which still happen to the steamship, irrespective of size, nationality or ownership, show that as in the case of the sailing ships, nature is no respecter of persons or vessels. It is impossible by taking thought ever to tame wind and wave. Just as the ancients in their literature reflect a feeling for the tremendous and mysterious reality of the sea, so that sense is still deeply ingrained in the sailor of to-day. The more experienced the mariner, so much more seriously does he respect this superhuman power; and even on the brightest occasions he has always at the back of his mind that subtle, treacherous, seductive influence which, by a quick transformation in outward appearance, will plunge his vessel into gravest danger. Even after the first few occasions the least knowledgeable recruit deduces for himself this formula as a guiding principle : between the sailor and the sea there is an age-long feud, and in the end the latter must always win.

Now it is just because the ocean is the recognised enemy of man that there has ever existed a solidarity, a special fraternity, which is absolutely unique, different altogether from any other family or community, and limited neither by nationality nor century. It is

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as old as seafaring, and will last as long. This fellowship is recognised in that wonderful expression the Brotherhood of the Sea. It embraces every kind of vessel, sail or engine, regardless of tonnage ; and yet this association of comrades is the most exclusive of all the world's institutions. Where potentates and plutocrats would be refused admission, the tattered, unkempt man with the puckered gaze and clear china-blue eyes is a distinguished member. Here on a common footing meet sailors who have laid out along a yard in Cape Horn weather, trawlermen who have brought home their catches safe through the nasty North Sea or been nearly frozen in Icelandic waters ; here come gallant admirals and pioneers who have handled squadrons and fleets with the ease and confidence of a child controlling a toy-boat. Into this vast and honourable assembly come all grades who can give the one requisite pass-word *seaman*. Nothing else is required, for this alone suffices to show that in uniting as fellow-sufferers against the ocean's untameable and terrific domination, there is at once a brotherhood among men.

And from this there follows a special code of honour ; also an attitude, by no means identical with shore standards of conduct. Greed, for instance, selfishness, meanness—these vices are utterly ruled out and would disqualify a candidate, for they would prove that he was no real seafarer. On the other hand, the basic idea of this romantic corporation is one of chivalry : that one seaman, no matter where he is or whatever the circumstances, always stands by another seaman when in trouble ; and that one ship always stands by another ship when in distress. It is one of those essential rules which have never dared to be broken even in warfare, with very few historical exceptions, such as those unforgettable and deeply regrettable

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affairs which stained the record of the German Navy and were condemned by the rest of the world's seamanhood. The rule, indeed, is so rigid that it is recognised and embodied in maritime legislation. Not even the most expensively-run mail steamer, burning hundreds of pounds' worth of fuel a day, would hesitate for a moment to alter course and steam at full speed in response to a wireless "S.O.S." signal. No vessel carrying the rarest of cargoes, or the most important of personages, would ever dare to show herself in port had she passed by a sister begging to be assisted, whilst yet it had been possible to help.

During the Great War nothing so brought about that wonderful brotherhood between the personnel of the British and American navies, the Mercantile Marine, the fishermen and the yachtsmen, as this spirit of unselfishness and mutual aid on the seas. The instinct of sacrifice was obeying an ancient tradition, and it had been put there by the cruelty of great waters. In peace time, happily since the War we have seen British and American steamers rescuing German seamen ; German seamen coming gallantly to the aid of British and Americans. Scandinavians, Italians, Danes—all nationalities of sailors to-day are ready to help each other on the high seas, and at any moment that necessary comfort may be required ; for it needs only a winter's gale in the Bay of Biscay, an unusual buffeting in the North Sea, or an Atlantic iceberg to bring about the required crisis and opportunity to show that the chivalry of the sea is just as alive as ever.

In the following chapters, then, we shall have as our motive the sailorman standing by his fellows. We shall watch ships in their hours of anxiety, and we shall endeavour to live again those tense and dramatic moments which seemed like years. Nothing so thrills

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the civilised universe as a brave rescue of mariners apparently doomed ; few incidents have ever gripped the public imagination recently with such vividness as that memorable occasion last year when the American s.s. *President Roosevelt* (fully carrying out afloat the very spirit which animated her namesake on land) stood by and made those admirable rescues from the little British freighter s.s. *Antinoe*. And yet this was but one page in that glorious story of the business in great waters which will never be closed. Almost every month a fresh and lovely addition of unselfish gallantry is being added to that golden record. There is something specially compelling in this long primitive drama between the old changeless turbulent sea and the race of men who have chosen deliberately the ship life. You will watch the long-standing feud being continued and perpetuated in modern ships long after the sailing ships had for the most part withdrawn from the contest. We shall observe scenes and happenings which not merely enthrall us but make us proud of the sea's great brotherhood. Nothing so tests and reveals a man's character as danger ; no condition so exemplifies the sailor-like trait as his behaviour when things seem to be desperate.

Perhaps to some it may seem but natural that among the following incidents the sailing craft should become ready victims of adversity, yet surprising that modern steamers should meet with mishap. But the vessel which is absolutely sea-proof is as unlikely to be built as the perfect, immaculate seaman can ever exist. Even the best-found vessels come to grief through a succession of circumstances or some error in human judgment. The primary cause of the *Antinoe's* loss was the fact that her steering gear jammed. From that there followed a series of progressive happenings, bad becoming worse and individual items accumulating until she was unable to put up a fight. The result was the

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE SEA

total loss of ship and the bare escape of captain with crew.

Or, again, consider that German s.s. *Hammonia*, which foundered seventy-five miles west of Vigo, on 9th September 1922, owing to the flooding of the forward engine-room and adjacent holds. She was on a voyage from Hamburg to Cuba; there was a heavy Atlantic sea and the weather was squally. Water entered the starboard coal-ports, but, in some mysterious manner which was never explained even at the Hamburg Court of Inquiry, a large quantity must have entered also in another way. The bottom of the starboard bunker collapsed, two water-tight compartments filled, and she became in a helpless and hopeless condition, though the Court found that no blame was attributed to officers or crew.

Owing to the humane brotherhood of the sea four British steamers rushed to the aid of their late enemies. Of these four, one was the big Union-Castle liner *Kinfauns Castle*, whose commanding officer, Captain E. W. Day, at 9.30 that morning received a wireless S.O.S. call from the *Hammonia* that she was in a sinking condition, required assistance and had on board a thousand passengers. The South African liner, therefore, altered course immediately, and after two and a half hours' steaming came in sight of the sinking *Hammonia*, together with a number of submerged lifeboats, as well as rafts, with people clinging thereto desperately. Captain Day had proceeded at full speed, and in the meantime had prepared hospital and passenger accommodation, got ready hot beef tea, brandy, blankets and boats that only wanted lowering.

Aboard the German there was a certain amount of panic among the Spanish 'tween-deck passengers. Several of her lifeboats had been lowered away in that

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rash, hasty madness which seizes some people ; and fifteen passengers together with four crew were thus lost. On arriving at the scene, Captain Day asked the German if he intended to abandon ship, and the answer came "Yes." The *Kinfauns Castle* accordingly sent six boats over the heavy sea that was being kicked up by a fresh N.E. gale. In the meantime that S.O.S. signal had been picked up by the British s.s. *Euclid*, who steered towards the position at her ablest speed, and when she arrived half an hour after noon alongside the *Hammonia*, the latter was lying beam-on to the big Atlantic sea with a heavy list. *Euclid* stopped, rigged up ladders over the side, and to her rowed some of *Hammonia's* boats. In charge of *Euclid's* second officer went the *Euclid's* lifeboat which succeeded in rescuing some hysterical foreign women and others. Altogether this ship was able to save eighty-nine people.

At 2.15 p.m. the British s.s. *Soldier Prince*, also in answer to the same signal, came along, lowered her port lifeboat which went away in charge of the chief officer, and a few minutes later lowered the starboard lifeboat with the second officer ; and thus these were able to get their quota of passengers. The former boat, however, had proceeded to the quarter of the doomed ship. This was a dangerous proceeding, but was necessary, inasmuch as most of the remaining survivors were there located. The boat got caught under the quarter of the German, and inevitably stove-in through the heavy rise and fall of the hull in that awkward sea. Half an hour after *Soldier Prince* came the British s.s. *City of Valencia*, to find this strange picture of one sinking liner, one big South African liner and two other steamers all stopped, with boats rising and falling among the sea mountains and green valleys. At once the *City of Valencia* safely lowered a couple of boats under the second and third officers

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respectively, with volunteer crews of Europeans and natives.

In this way, notwithstanding that throughout the afternoon weather continued bad, I believe that all were saved by these four British ships, the *Kinfauns Castle* alone being responsible for 385, the only loss of life being due to *Hammonia's* own boats capsizing whilst being lowered. Seamanship and cool courage had been displayed by all those in charge of boats and steamers which came to the German's help, and the Hamburg Court of Inquiry did not withhold its praise from this quartette for its fine energetic work. But the Corporation of Lloyd's, in accordance with its eighty-year-old practice of awarding medals to those who have by extraordinary exertions contributed to the saving of life at sea, now bestowed their silver medal on Captain E. W. Day, the chief officer, the second and fourth officers of *Kinfauns Castle* ; on Captain George Scott of *Euclid* (who had won his D.S.O. against the Germans during the War) ; on Captain W. L. Duncan of the *Soldier Prince* ; and on Captain W. A. Williamson of the *City of Valencia*. Brass tablets recording the circumstances of the rescue were also presented to each of these four ships.

I consider that this affair of 9th September is as good an example of the brotherhood of the sea, in practical application, as ever one could wish. The second boat from *Kinfauns Castle* having been detailed to pick up from life-buoys, rafts and submerged boats people who were drowning, succeeded in transferring them to the *City of Valencia*, but the boat itself got stove-in, though all hands were saved. It was lucky that these rescuing steamers should have been able to reach the vicinity so readily ; for the work was scarcely completed, the captain and officers had only just been taken off at 6.20 p.m. by the last of *Kinfauns Castle's* boats, when

INTRODUCTION

six minutes later the *Hammonia* went down to her grave and the sea swallowed her up.

Our long story, however, is by no means confined to recent steamship events, and we shall begin by first transferring ourselves back into the days of sail and cordage.

PART I

THE BROTHERHOOD OF SAIL

CHAPTER II

BROTHERS IN ADVERSITY

ANSON'S four-year voyage round the world during the eighteenth century has been regarded by its contemporary artists as important chiefly for the fact that he brought back a record amount of booty. It is true that thirty waggons of treasure, convoyed by an armed guard of seamen and marines, were brought up to London by road and created a first-class sensation among the populace. It is also true that Anson thus became rich, and three years later was rewarded with a peerage after defeating the French fleet. But there is a tragic side to Anson's world voyage which must be reckoned up alongside his unquestionably fine achievement: for there were heavy losses both in respect of men and of ships. Dogged by bad weather, disease and ill-luck, only an officer of his perseverance and pertinacity could have seen the job through.

The crews died like flies in autumn: for by the time the squadron had reached Cape Horn weather, there were many dead, literally hundreds fallen sick, and perishing at the rate of two dozen a week. Sometimes there were five corpses already sown up in their hammocks awaiting burial, but washing about the decks for lack of men to put them over the side. The marvellous thing about this voyage is that any men came back to Portsmouth alive. So with regard to the ships. Originally Anson's squadron consisted of the flagship *Centurion*, *Wager*, four other ships and two victuallers. There arrived back at Spithead in June 1744 only the *Centurion*.

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Now we shall occupy ourselves in this present chapter solely with the extraordinary events which concerned the *Wager* and her people during six exciting years. This man-of-war had once been an East Indiaman, and it shows the close connection which existed in those days that a merchantman could be readily employed for naval service. On this particular expedition her ample cargo space, which had been originally used for carrying goods of the Honourable East India Company, was employed for carrying stores for Anson's squadron, some gear for careening the ships, together with bale goods and other merchandise that were deemed requisite. The importance of the careening gear, when those wooden ships soon got foul in the warm southern waters and all thought of dry docks was utterly impracticable, could not be exaggerated. But the *Wager*, thus encumbered with all manner of heavy articles, cluttered up with tiresome commodities, was not in a perfect condition for being easily handled during the "roaring forties." Moreover, her crew of seamen consisted of those unwilling fellows who had been pressed after arriving from long voyages, and might have been enjoying the comforts of shore-life to which they were justly entitled. The land-forces in the *Wager* were nothing but a lot of decrepit invalids from Chelsea Hospital ; and they, too, had come to sea very much against their will.

No wonder that her commanding officer, Captain Kid, set forth with the most gloomy forebodings. He died on the voyage, but was succeeded by Captain Cheap, and the ship was still able to get across the Atlantic without misadventure even with this unhappy company. She was with the squadron, and had almost gained the southern end of those Straits of Le Maire which separate Tierra del Fuego from the lonely, lofty, rocky Staten Island. *Wager* was the rear ship when

BROTHERS IN ADVERSITY

the wind suddenly shifted to the south. What with this and the tide she narrowly escaped being wrecked ; but, to the surprise of everybody on board, she just managed to weather the rocks and soon regained her station with the squadron.

For a brief period all went well, but in a heavy sea she carried away her mizzen-mast, all the windward chain-plates being broken. The *Wager* was now experiencing that same historic Cape Horn weather, with its westerly winds, that worried Elizabethan ships before them, and made martyrs of many another sailing ship in the generations to come. But the circumstances were particularly unfortunate in the case of the *Wager*, since her carpenter had been temporarily lent to the flagship for duties, and by reason of the incessant bad weather it had been impossible to lower a boat. Only at length after a few more days did he return, and then he made the best of a bad job by using a lower stun'-sl boom as a new mizzen-mast.

It was customary in those days of the old sailing ships, as you will observe from naval prints and models, to stow the bower anchor by the fore chain plates ; but now the *Wager's* fore shrouds and chain plates had all become broken, so the best bower anchor had to be cut away in order to ease the foremast. In fact, this ex-East Indiaman was already in a generally shattered and crazy condition, by no means suitable for the region of the world's worst weather. In the meantime, the rest of the squadron had gone ahead, leaving the unhappy *Wager* rolling about in those tempestuous seas. Nor was this all, for so little was still known of this neighbourhood that the Navy possessed no charts, and the atmosphere had been so unfavourable as to prevent the ship getting sights. Thus, to be concise, she had lost herself and then found herself on a wrong course heading for a lee shore.

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The *Wager* had managed not only to weather Cape Horn, but to proceed up the Pacific coast of Patagonia, but she was dangerously near to the land. His officers tried to persuade Captain Cheap to bear away to the westward, but the latter had instructions from Commodore Anson to rendezvous at the island of Socorro, which is near the island of Chiloe. The archipelago, to which Chiloe also gives its name, consists of sixty islands lying about fifty miles off the Chilean coast, and to-day the inhabitants are still chiefly Indians and half-breeds. It was quite a natural place for a rendezvous ; and, indeed, this part of the South American shore is particularly so suited with its numerous bays and islands. Admiral von Spee, you will remember, subsequent to the battle of Coronel, made a rendezvous in November 1914 further south in the Gulf of Penas, where his colliers were to join him.

Thus we must put ourselves into the mind of Captain Cheap. In spite of the dangerous proximity of the land, and the absence of hydrographical knowledge, he was fully conscious of his duty to make the rendezvous ; the absence of his unit would weaken the squadron in its primary object to attack what was still called the "Spanish coast." In plain language Socorro could not be captured without the *Wager*, which carried the ordnance and military stores. With this consciousness Captain Cheap saw no alternative other than a blind adherence to orders, notwithstanding all the dangers of a lee shore. It was an age, too, when naval officers were not encouraged to rely on circumstances which might justifiably modify the strict letter of instructions ; rather it was a period when formality in literature and in life were as little open to free imagination as the movements of the minuet.

So it turned out that when birds and weeds indicated the approaching shore, and these symptoms were sub-



THE WRECK OF THE "WILSON'S" SHIP

The wreck is in the background Ship's company busy ashore.

(See page 20)

BROTHERS IN ADVERSITY

stantiated by what were thought to be the distant mountains, it would have been difficult to claw off. Those eighteenth-century sailing ships were anything but handy, and they required plenty of sea-room even with the smartest of crews. But now everything conspired to bring about a climax. First of all the straps of the fore "jeer blocks" broke. The word "jeer" was still used, as it had been in Elizabethan times, to signify the halyard. It led through a block which was seized close to the top and then led down to another block which was at the bottom of the mast close to the deck. Now the effect of this accident was that the foreyard came down with a run; and, inasmuch as most of the crew were worn out through fatigue or sick of scurvy, it was a considerable time before the yard could be again hoisted. This was no sooner done than land was most distinctly seen on the port side (or larboard, as it was still known), bearing N.W., to which she was heading.

Captain Cheap had now not more than a dozen hands fit for duty, but he at once set again his foresail, and wore ship so that she now headed south, and made every effort to get clear of the land. The weather was contending otherwise; for instead of being tempestuous it was now of hurricane force and blowing right on shore. Night followed, and the *Wager* was in gravest danger from the heavy seas and proximity of rocks. There was nothing for it but to set topsails and try desperately hard to claw off; but no sooner were they set than they were blown away from the yards.

The inevitable happened at 4 a.m., when the ship struck good and hearty; and then she pounded heavily, laid on her beam ends, with the sea breaking right over her and the full force of the Pacific doing its wildest. Think of this three-master with her gunports and heavy stateliness now no longer a picture of dignity but of

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doom. Braces and sheets and canvas were slatting about, yards swaying and masts whipping, whilst the great seas came smashing thunderously against the stout hull. Every one on board who had strength to move his limbs came tumbling up to the quarter-deck, including many who had not shown their faces on deck for over two months. They just managed to pull themselves together, but there were some who in their last stages of scurvy were unable to get out of their hammocks and remained to be drowned. It was a pathetic band of brothers now that the sea was doing its direst.

There was no denying the seriousness of the situation, as the helpless *Wager* lay surrounded by spiteful breaking seas, and every man expected each minute to be his last. Next came a terror of a wave which lifted her weight from the ground, but presently dropped her again and smashed her tiller ; just a mere variation of the torture. But the result of this aggregation of horrors was to drive some men out of their senses ; and one man went careering madly about deck flourishing over his head a cutlass, striking every one who was near and calling himself king of the country, until they knocked him down for their own defence. But the weakest, who were too prostrate with sickness to care, allowed themselves to be jerked and rolled about by the ship in her agonies. We all know how differently temperaments are affected in the hour of peril, and one of the bravest men in the ship became so panic-stricken by the foaming breakers around that it was with difficulty he could be prevented from throwing himself over the rails of the quarter-deck. On the other hand, there were some who remained amazingly cheery and calm ; especially admirable was the conduct of Mr Jones, the mate, who, in spite or because of the fact that this was his second experience of shipwreck,

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displayed a coolness and steady influence on others, although inwardly he well realised the hopelessness of the situation.

The *Wager* moved again, and by working sheets and braces she was coaxed in between a couple of big rocks, where she stuck, and found that the windward rock afforded her some shelter from the sea. It was now decided to cut away main and fore masts, but she was still banging her hull ominously against the unyielding ground. But when the day broke and the thick weather cleared away for a few moments it was possible to glimpse the land, which was quite close; so the next consideration was to save life by hoisting out the ship's boats. In those days boat-davits or great derricks were not in use; but by means of tackles to yards or masts and with plenty of hands there was no difficulty. In the case of *Wager* there remained no masts, and consequently it took some time to get this work accomplished. Even then, there was such a panic to get into the first boat that some narrowly escaped being drowned.

Captain Cheap, who had dislocated his shoulder the previous day whilst going for'ard to look at the fore yard, continued to give his orders with unperturbed coolness, but the men had now got out of hand. He was anxious to have every one leave as soon as possible, whilst he himself insisted on being the last. But the apparent certainty of safety now reacted upon those men who had previously been expecting death. If they had come out from Portsmouth ill-disposed after long voyaging, they were now far away from all press-gangs, and the discipline of the old *Wager* was as out of commission at this stage as the ship herself. This unruly bunch now became riotous, broke open every chest and box, looting right and left. Casks of brandy and wine, as they were brought up to the hatchways,

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were stove in by them, and these fellows got so drunk that several of them never left the decks but were drowned in their stupor, their bodies washing about the *Wager* for days after. The boatswain was one of these who had foolishly resolved never to leave so long as there remained any liquor.

Captain Cheap had been put into a boat and carried ashore, which, with its dreary, desolate, barren appearance, seemed to offer but little welcome to the crowd. They were homeless, wet, cold and hungry ; but they were alive. And then, looking about, they discovered a little distance from the beach a wood ; and within that wood an uninhabited Indian hut. Outside the night had settled down, it was blowing another gale and it was pouring with rain, so it was good to be inside here, even if there was hardly room to move and no food. There were, however, some Indian lances and arms, and these suggested unhappy possibilities later on. During that night, and in the midst of this thronged hovel, died one of the invalids ; but he was lucky, for others had been able to find shelter only under a great tree outside, where two men perished in the cold and rainy night.

When morning came the survivors had fasted forty-eight hours, and the call of hunger demanded immediate attention. These unfortunate brother mariners needed all their ability to surmount the trouble ; but they had preserved from the wreck three pounds of biscuit dust in a bag. Someone managed to kill a seagull, others picked some wild celery, and they had brought ashore an iron pot. Thus they were able to make some soup, which should have done them good in their state of extreme weariness. Unfortunately the effect was to upset their stomachs with violent vomitings. No, it was not because of the herbs, but simply owing to the bag, into which the sweepings

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of the bread-room had been dumped, having previously been used for tobacco. Some of the latter remaining had mixed itself with the soup !

Here, then, was a strange, rough community numbering about a hundred and forty. You can picture in your mind a crowd of beings, some of the officers in three-cornered hats and cut-away coats, knee-breeches and stockings ; whilst here and there you would stumble across some hard-bitten old salt in pilot jacket and baggy trousers. Among the former was a young man in his eighteenth year, the Hon. John Byron, the fourth Lord Byron's second son. This junior officer, who eventually received the nickname of "Foul-weather Jack" and was to sail round the world on a future expedition, became grandfather of the celebrated poet. Those who are interested in heredity and its modification by environment may wonder to what extent John Byron's tough adventurous experiences had in forming the character of his son or handing on his courage to the venturesome libertine poet.

Now, apart from those hundred and forty who had come ashore, there still remained a few drunkards and pillagers who could not be persuaded to leave the *Wager* even now, in spite of the fact that an officer was rowed out to the wreck. He, indeed, found them so mutinous that his visit was useless. On a subsequent night the heavy gale and big seas threatened the mad fools with such certain destruction that they changed their minds before the old ship should break into small pieces. It is an historical fact that the truest seaman sometimes becomes the least disciplined the moment his vessel shows herself a hopeless wreck, and we had instances of this during the war when shipping was being mined, or torpedoed, or cast ashore through lack of shore lights. The plundering

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instinct is in the case of the sailor less the propensity to do wrong than to adventure where he has been wont to obey. The bonds of duty being suddenly snapped, the desire to manifest his primitive freedom becomes overpowering.

But it was infinitely worse with these uneducated, ill-treated, impressed men of the eighteenth century, who had got to such a condition that they hated ship-life. Having now become sated with their drunken orgy, and had enough of wandering about helping themselves to officers' belongings, they became extremely annoyed that no one now came to fetch them ashore. They even went so far as to fire one of the quarter-deck guns at the hut, and the ball only just missed hitting and destroying every one inside. Something had to be done to stop a recurrence, so an attempt was made again to go off in the boat. But this was accomplished only with difficulty and some delay. The sea was still so bad, there was a dangerous mast banging about against the hull, and there was other gear alongside making it none too pleasant for the job to be done. Just because the signals were not immediately answered, the mutineers became furiously angry, smashed everything on which they could lay their hands, broke up cabins, quarrelled with each other over the spoil, and during such a dispute strangled one of their own men. But they had sense enough to protect themselves with arms and ammunition, which presently they brought ashore when the boat arrived.

They then soon learned that the loss of ship did not mean the end of authority and discipline. On the contrary, Captain Cheap and an officer of marines promptly deprived them of their weapons and of the officers' spare suits, which had been slipped over the men's greasy trousers and dirty check shirts. The ringleader was of all people the boatswain, who should

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have known better, but Captain Cheap soon felled him to the ground with a cane.

But what about making some sort of a home, since that hut was all too small? The carpenter, gunner and others were now ordered to capsize the ship's cutter, fix it on props, and thus there was some further protection from the vile weather. Then for food they set to work and gathered some limpets, mussels, other kinds of shellfish and even some sea-fowl. But it was no pleasant pastime doing all this among the corpses of their drowned shipmates, some of which were badly mangled by the violent surf. Even the carrion-crows which had swooped down for a feast on these ghastly remains were killed to make a meal for the starving community. And still every one went very hungry.

It is to Captain Cheap's credit that in spite of the awkward circumstances and the mutinous spirit he managed to restore order and to ration with frugal economy such provisions as the weather allowed them to retrieve from the ship; the whole of which was now submerged, save for the quarter-deck and part of the fo'c'sle. But the dead bodies floating up and down the decks in no wise lessened such efforts at salvage. Ashore the goods were deposited in a store-tent made out of sails, and needed careful guarding by night, though, in spite of the utmost vigilance, some of the more daring managed to break in and pilfer. It is easy enough to criticise thieves, but when they are starving, as these were, and the food dealt out was totally inadequate, who could expect otherwise? If a man to-day, who has fasted through sheer penury for days, steals a loaf out of a baker's window, can you wonder that the magistrate treats him with the utmost lenience? For, before a human can be honest, he must be allowed to eat and live. As a fact, many

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of the *Wager's* crew actually died through sheer hunger ; and one poor starving fellow was so in need of food that he picked up the liver from the body of a drowned man and was about to make of it a meal, had not he been prevented in time. Yes ; those people had crossed the Atlantic and weathered Cape Horn only to meet something much worse.

It was September when the squadron had sailed away from Spithead, and now it was the middle of May. The whole coast, as far as the eye could reach, was one long stretch of dismal breakers, with the long range of the Andes on the mainland. The obvious enterprise was therefore to find out exactly where they were and what could be done to improve their impossible situation. As they were apparently on an island, it was essential then to make a reconnaissance by water, and the longboat would be required to make a cruise round. As this stout craft was still aboard the wreck, some of the hands were sent off to cut away the *Wager's* gunwale and so lower the longboat into the sea. But whilst this was being done there suddenly appeared three canoes of Indians, paddling round the point. Friends were made with these swarthy long-haired people, to whom Captain Cheap made presents of goods from the ship. The visitors returned after a couple of days with gifts of three welcome sheep, and later departed. For a time the work went on, more provisions and some liquor were brought ashore from the wreck ; but the general lack of food and the prospect of the future caused the utmost dissatisfaction on the island. Nor was the cold in any degree less endurable, and the men were again getting out of hand.

Some of them were planning a scheme to desert their officers, and one faction which consisted of less than a dozen bad characters were first about to blow

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up the captain's hut with half a barrel of gunpowder, when they were prevented by the better conscience of a certain member in their party. They did, however, wander off, but were dismayed to find this was an island after all, so they settled down by themselves a mile or two away from the main camp. Of these deserters some returned to duty, but others were clever enough to hollow a canoe out of one of the *Wager's* great masts, and they also managed to build a punt. By this means they got right away, but they were never heard of again. Their departure was none the less a blessing in disguise ; for the most violent agitators are usually the worst workers, and amongst this faction was James Mitchell, who was the man presumed to have committed a couple of murders since the *Wager* foundered.

John Byron, who wrote an account of all this, gives us enough hints of Captain Cheap's character to justify suspicions which doubtless the reader has already formed in his own mind. I remember many years ago a well-known naval officer remarking to me that when a mutiny breaks out it is almost always the fault of the captain. There are certain instances within the memory of officers still afloat which well bear this out, but have happily been nearly, if not entirely, forgotten. Now Captain Cheap was one of those who are more jealous of enforcing their authority than capable of knowing how to rule without doing idiotic and rash things. It is characteristic of his command that even the officers were no admirers of him and contended among themselves. One need not stress this too much, but it is only fair to show that at times the great brotherhood of the sea can be spoilt by bad leadership. Men will go through every kind of human discomfort if only the skipper has the requisite qualities to inspire confidence ; but those incidents of un-

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fortunate seamanship and navigation for which Cheap was responsible, and the accumulation of grievances under his command, certainly ruined that ideal solidarity which in other chapters we shall see so magnificently exhibited.

Thus, in a moment of uncertainty, he shot dead with his pistol Mr Cozens, a midshipman, whose conduct, whilst admittedly provoking, did not demand capital punishment. This action still further infuriated the men, for they had a great affection for the dead officer. But by now the longboat, which had been brought ashore, had been taken in hand so as to make her more suitable for the new purpose. In order to carry everybody, she required to be lengthened, so she was hauled up, placed on blocks, sawn in two and given another twelve feet. It was a busy scene to behold men shaping timber and working away under the carpenter's direction.

Some of the men now conceived the desire to get home by the Magellan Straits, and even put this suggestion before Captain Cheap, who disapproved ; for the plan in his mind was that which in the year 1918 filled the brain of the German raider *Seeadler's* captain after she had been wrecked in the Pacific, and he was compelled to make a long voyage in one of the ship's boats. Indeed, having spent several years at the conclusion of the Great War working on Admiralty documents, I could not help noticing how carefully our late enemies seemed to have benefited by studying past naval history, and sifting out therefrom many a useful conclusion.

Just as Count von Lucknel with his party in one of the *Seeadler's* lifeboats hoped to sail on till able to seize by a quick coup some merchantman, so Captain Cheap was intending to go north in the *Wager's* longboat, seize some Spanish ship, and thus rejoin Com-

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modore Anson. But the *Wager's* men, now reduced to a hundred, had become obsessed with the idea of taking the longboat south about. Before this longboat was quite ready, two officers, Mr Byron and the purser, together with ten men, were sent out in the *Wager's* barge to reconnoitre the neighbourhood of this which they had named Wager's Island ; but the weather and seas were so bad that they did not get very far. On their return they found that the malcontents were as riotous and drunken as ever and still trying to win the captain to their scheme, so that for quietness he had to feign agreement for a while. But when they stipulated for what would nowadays be called a Soviet basis, he refused openly to have anything to do with the proposition.

His professional knowledge would be to them highly desirable, but they were for insisting that he should do nothing without consulting his officers. Therefore, under the pretence that he was to be brought home to England and tried for the murder of Mr Cozens, they arrested Captain Cheap. In the end, however, the longboat was found to be too small to take every one, so Captain Cheap and some others, including marines, were left behind, but fifty-nine survivors now set forth in her, twelve in the cutter and ten in the barge. But a sudden squall soon split the longboat's foresail, the weather continued bad, and the barge soon came back with the excuse that they needed some more canvas. By this time the *Wager*, which had been steadily breaking up, but distributing her goods on to the beach, was apparently blown up, with upper works all gone, and no further expectation of food coming ashore could be held out. Indeed, the only fare now consisted of frying some herbs and wild celery in the tallow of salved candles.

But since that longboat had at last gone for good,

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Captain Cheap was freed of the worst characters, and there came back a few men who had deserted. This would enable the captain to go ahead with his northerly plan ; but there remained only two boats for this purpose. The barge and yawl were both in bad condition and needed considerable repairing before being seaworthy, yet, in spite of the fact that the carpenter was gone, the job was accomplished moderately well. And then that greater problem of food was aggravated by three of the men stealing some flour which had been laid aside as part of the reserve for when they should leave the island and put to sea. Now this theft was regarded as a most heinous crime, having regard to the necessities of the party as a whole. Two of the three men were caught, though the third escaped to the woods. The pair were condemned to be whipped and then to be banished to a desert island some distance off. Before the latter part of this sentence could be put into execution, one of the two got away, though the other was set on an island, given a bit of a hut, a kindled fire, and left by himself, where he died during the next three days.

But then came an unexpected fine day, and a visit to the *Wager* wreck was rewarded by being able to hook up three casks of beef, which soon were to restore starving men to health. The middle of December arrived and no better weather could ever be expected in those parts, so now the two boats were launched ; Captain Cheap, the surgeon and Mr Byron in the barge with nine men, whilst Lieutenant Hamilton (a marine officer) and Mr Campbell, another officer, together with six men, went in the yawl. Within two hours a strong westerly gale and heavy sea overcame them, so that they had to up-helm and make a fair wind of it. To prevent being utterly swamped, the men had to sit close to each other, using their backs

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as a kind of gunwale ; but even then the little craft were so near sinking that all heavy weights such as the beef and grapnel anchor had to be thrown overboard.

It was a precarious bit of work steering those little boats through breaking seas, rushing fast towards a lee shore in a race against the approaching night ; and not a man of them ever expected to see another dawn. The nearer the shore, of course, so much worse was the sea. How could small craft expect to keep afloat ? But just in time there was sighted a small opening between the rocks, through which first the yawl and then the barge ran safely in to find a harbour as quiet and smooth as an English mill-pond. But that night it rained without ceasing, and thus saturated to their skins the men shivered till morning, when a frost followed, so that sleep was out of the question. Poor desperate little band of sufferers, here they were again without food. None could be found ashore, so the next day they reached another island, which turned out to be a mere swamp. But the surgeon managed to get a goose and they made a fire.

At length the favourable southerly wind enabled them to make good progress to the north. Afterwards, sometimes sailing and sometimes using their oars, sheltering usually at night in coves and getting what food they could gather and going through almost every sort of adventure ; occasionally losing themselves in a cul-de-sac among the thousand islands of the uninhabited Chonos archipelago, and severely interrupted by foul weather, they all began to lose heart and to be indifferent to their future fate. Thus arrived and passed Christmas Day, though the exact reckoning was a matter of dispute, so little hold had they retained on the calendar. Seal were killed, shell-fish were gathered, but the problem of negotiating those persistent waves was one long source of anxiety. " We

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got into a sea that was horrid," remarked Byron ; " for it ran all in heaps, like the Race of Portland, but much worse." This analogy is eloquent enough to any small-ship sailorman to require further explanation.

It was whilst all hands, except two in each boat, were ashore food-hunting that during the night it came on to blow very hard, and a great sea was tumbling in as the barge and yawl lay at anchor. Suddenly the couple in the yawl were roused from their sleep by wild shouting, and on looking out they saw, to their horror, the yawl had been turned bottom up by a big wave, and soon sank. This caused the drowning of William Rose, who had been *Wager's* quartermaster, but the other was able to reach the beach. The barge was saved from similar destruction only by heaving up anchor and pulling her clear of the breakers, where she brought up again.

Now when the time came to move on again, it was obvious that the barge could not carry every one. It was therefore necessary to leave behind at this isolated spot four marines ; but so disheartened and distressed had they become with all their experiences that they had no great objection to this further hardship. They were given arms, ammunition and a few necessaries ; they well knew that on this swampy, thickly wooded, sea-pounded, inhospitable bit of territory they would surely starve to a miserable death. And yet such was their pluck, such was their unselfish feeling towards their departing shipmates, that they stood up on the beach, gave the barge people three cheers, and then called out, " God bless the king." It must have cost a terrible effort to have shown such stoic fortitude in the most hopeless of circumstances.

The barge was rowed on to the westward, they tried in vain to weather a cape, found the seas beyond all endurance, gave up the attempt, nearly foundered,

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landed four men on this miserable shore, encountered atrocious seas, landed for a time on another island to gather some berries, and eventually got back to Wager's Island, less alive than dead. Thus two whole months of extreme misery and daily danger had been rendered useless because they could not weather a headland like Portland Bill.

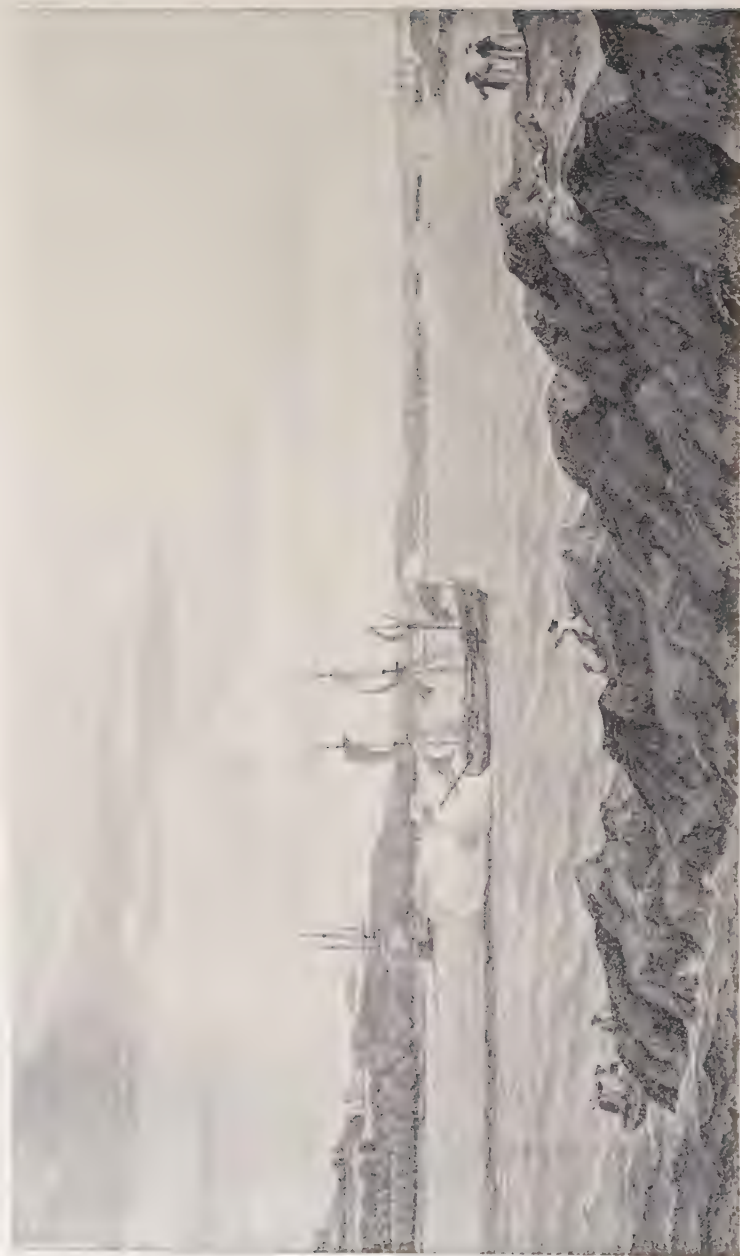
The first duty now was to secure well the barge ; they next walked up to the line of thatched huts, and to their amazement found that one hut had been nailed up in their absence. This suggested that the natives had been here, and was substantiated a fortnight later by the arrival of a party of Chonos Indians from the neighbourhood of Chiloe Island, which was the southernmost settlement under Spanish jurisdiction. It happened that the *Wager's* surgeon, Mr Elliot, was able to speak a few Spanish words, and an agreement was made with the leading native that if the latter would guide the Englishmen in the barge to one of the Spanish settlements, the Indian should be given the barge as a present.

Now when the barge had arrived back from that fruitless two months' voyage, her complement had numbered sixteen, which was just as many as she could carry with the smallest margin of safety. On landing at Wager Island two of these men had died through hunger, and a third had run away to avoid punishment for theft. Thus there was now room for the head Indian, named Martin, and his servant, Emanuel ; the rest of the Indians continued in a couple of canoes. After starting off on a second attempt, the barge had the canoes as company for two or three days, and progress was both slow and trying, especially when it was necessary to use the oars. One of the Englishmen, soon after commencing to row, expired through sheer weakness ; another half-starved

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fellow named John Bosman, who had been the strongest in the party, collapsed from the thwart into the bottom of the boat and soon died. Byron much criticised Captain Cheap for not sharing with these dying men a piece of boiled seal, merely allowing them to exist on mussels and herbs. Is it to be wondered that men died in trying to pull a heavy boat against wind and sea? Can you marvel that this inefficient leader was loathed by the rest of the party, who remarked that he deserved to be deserted for his abominable behaviour? Even after making due allowance for his difficulties, for the need of strict discipline, and for issuing the smallest rations, it is impossible to acquit Captain Cheap of the responsibility for more than one death which might have been avoided. His men had lost all confidence in him, and there was an unsatisfactory feeling engendered which under the right captain would have been something very different.

The guide was anxious to take them up a rapid-running river, a short cut that was more suitable for light canoes than for this heavy barge. A halt was made whilst the Indian went off in a canoe to fetch some seal, leaving Emanuel behind to show where the shell-fish were the most plentiful. But by an act of treachery six of the barge's crew, together with Emanuel, got away in the barge and put to sea, leaving the rest stranded. But the Indian chief returned in his canoe, and after a few days Emanuel also came back, having left the barge party as soon as they put into a bay to the westward. Captain Cheap, Byron, Hamilton, Campbell and others now proceeded to assist the Indian chief in hauling the canoe across this island to a bay on the other side. It could carry not more than three, so in it went the Indian, Captain Cheap and Byron for two days, till they landed at a place where Indian wigwams were found as a settlement.



ENGLISH 20-GUN MAN-OF-WAR
Of the Eighteenth Century. Putting to sea from Plymouth.
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But after a while, with the promise that the Indians would come and join them in a few days, the party returned. These natives did, indeed, come, and were able to provide a certain amount of food. So it was that about the middle of March, after the death of Mr Elliot, the surgeon, Indians and Englishmen set out in canoes, crossed a great bay, and ascended a rapid river, landing by night on the swampy banks. We can scarcely imagine the hard lot of these distressed English mariners, worn out with rowing, barely kept alive with the minimum of seal meat and some sort of wild root most unpleasant to the taste, and with their clothes long since verminous. The progress was partly by sea, partly by river, then the canoes would be carried over land to avoid doubling dangerous promontories, where the little craft would be launched again. This marching, often through quagmire and over hidden hard stumps of trees, was most trying to weak men lacking both shoes and stockings. Their bodies were emaciated, but they now suffered even more from vermin than from hunger, and Captain Cheap, once a naval officer whose appearance demanded some respect, was now far gone mentally and physically. His beard was as long as a hermit's, his face was covered with dirt and seal-oil, his body just skin and bone, but so lousy as to resemble nothing so much as an ant-hill.

Further up the coast they came across some more Indians, from whom it was learned that a ship with a red flag had been seen off here ; it was Anson's victualler *Anna*, which became so damaged that she had to be broken up and her crew sent aboard the *Gloucester*. Here Mr Hamilton decided to remain behind, but one canoeful continued still to the northward, reached an island to the south of Chiloe, waited for the weather to moderate slightly, and then with a

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lugsail made out of pieces of blanket they started across the open bay. The canoe was leaking through a split bottom plank, the sea continually came pouring over the gunwale, and only by ceaseless bailing did that crazy craft reach Chiloe Island, where it now snowed hard.

But here there were found a habitation and friends of the Indian guide, who provided the famished with fish and potatoes, so the first real meal was enjoyed for many a long month. It was now June and the depth of winter, but the kindness and hospitality of these natives were of the warmest. A sheep was killed, a large meal cake was baked, Captain Cheap was laid on a bed of sheep-skins by a fire ; fowls, eggs, drink, as well as other victuals, were provided, and after a while the Englishmen were taken charge of by a Spanish guard from Castro, which is at the eastern side of the island. At Castro the corregidore gave them such ample food of which to eat that it is a wonder the survivors did not die after all their long fast. Clean clothing was even more welcome, and after a while the men were taken across to the mainland under military guard to the Spanish governor, but were now allowed considerable liberty. It was noticed by these Englishmen how unpopular was the domination of the Spaniards ; and, indeed, not till another seventy years was this rule to be rebelled against.

Rather we must remember that the eighteenth century period was really much closer to the fifteenth than to the nineteenth. Very few ships had ever come from Europe into the Pacific, save for those which sailed out of Spain and a few others from England, France and Holland. The time had not yet arrived when English and American whalers and traders were to bring along new ideas and take away produce of the country ; nor when those later sailing vessels were



ENGLISH PRIVATEERS IN THE ATLANTIC

This shews an incident which occurred in October, 1747, when the "Glorioso" was captured off Cape St. Vincent by the "Russell," "King George" (seen disabled), and the "Prince Frederick."

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to appear off this coastline to load with nitrate. It was, in fact, a stage in the world's history when so little nett progress seemed to be accomplished until the wonderful activity and enterprise of the nineteenth century should come along with its steamships, its telegraphs and railways. The world was still slumbering in its almost medieval sleep, and this western side of the South American continent was one of the last considerable areas to wake up.

Thus at this time, during which decaying Spain was beginning to lose its colonial grasp, there was rarely more than one ship which ever came down from Lima to visit this southern portion of Chile ; also Commodore Anson's arrival up and down these Pacific shores, and the capture of richly-laden Spanish freighters, had spread such alarm that vessels preferred security of their own harbours. But at the beginning of January 1742-3 there did arrive a ship which was bound for Valparaiso, and aboard her the Englishmen were allowed to take passage. She was a fine vessel of about 250 tons, whose captain was a Spaniard and ignorant of the first thing about nautical matters. But her master, her boatswain and his mate were all French, and excellent seamen. There was a mulatto pilot, and the crew consisted of Indians and negro slaves.

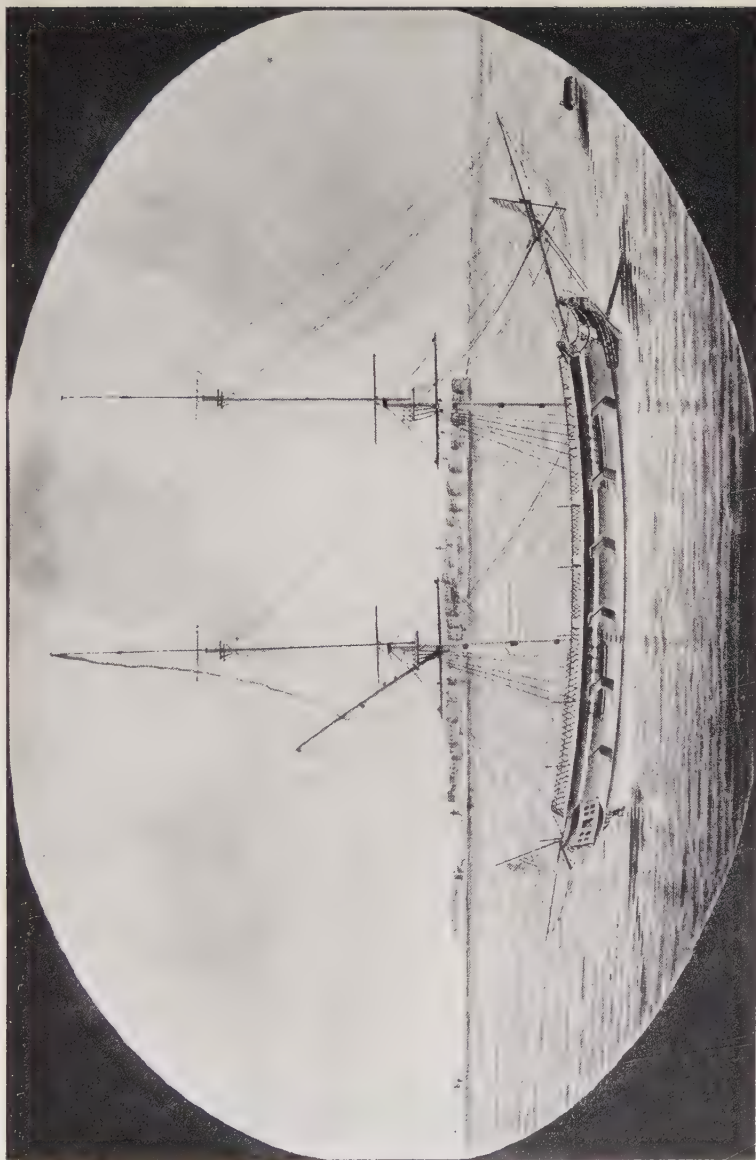
Having arrived at Valparaiso, which in those days was never visited by ships except in the summer-time, the Englishmen, four in number, were handed over as prisoners to the governor's care, and eventually sent inland to Santiago, where they enjoyed considerable freedom and hospitality. Indeed, one of them, Mr Campbell, remained to settle down here ; but at the end of two years there arrived from Lima a French ship which had put into Valparaiso, bound for Spain, and thus the other Englishmen were allowed to go down

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and embark. Now the name of this ship was the *Lys*, a St Malo frigate of 420 tons, with 16 guns, a crew of sixty and a few other passengers. This was the season when the southerly winds prevail, so she took a tack over towards Robinson Crusoe's Island of Juan Fernandez, having left Valparaiso about 20th December 1744 ; and coming about on the other tack reached Talcahuano on 6th January, where three other French ships were found anchored in the bay, waiting to sail in convoy.

After cattle had been killed and the meat salted for the voyage, each ship took aboard as many bullocks and sheep as their decks could hold, and on 27th January 1745 the squadron set sail. Unfortunately the *Lys*, when eight days out, developed a dangerous leak forward, so that she had to leave her sisters and go all the way back to Valparaiso. On the passage this leak became so bad that all hands, passengers included, had to keep the pumps going night and day. But some accidents come as blessings in disguise, and this was one of them ; for the other three vessels were captured by the enemy. The *Lys*, however, was lightened on her arrival and the weight brought down aft, so that the leak at the bows was satisfactorily stopped, and on the 1st March she put to sea again, notwithstanding that the season for rounding Cape Horn was already very late.

Every one was limited to a quart of water each day throughout the voyage from the first day out. Again the *Lys* made a board to the westward, going well to the north of Juan Fernandez, before coming about. It was when they had got down to about the latitude of where the *Wager* had been lost that the *Lys* encountered such a heavy westerly gale that she was compelled to lie-to under reefed mainsail for several days. And many more hard gales were her experience,



ONE OF THE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S CRUISERS

The "Panther," sketched by a Midshipman.

(See page 61)

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together with terrible seas and thick snow, before she could round Cape Horn and begin running north. She was a slow old thing, six knots being her best gait, but it was better than those months of anguish in the *Wager's* boats, and on 27th May the French ship crossed the Equator.

By this time the ship's drinking water had run so short that it was useless to think of reaching across to Europe. A course was therefore laid for the West Indies. On the 29th June the island of Tobago was sighted, and then it was intended to make the island of Martinique, which was expected to be sighted on the 1st July. But no allowance had been made for current, the *Lys* was carried through the Grenadines without either seeing or hitting the dangerous rocks ; and, finally, having thoroughly lost herself, she steered north to go between the islands of Puerto Rico and St Domingo. It was on the morning of 5th July that, whilst sailing along the shore, Captain Cheap came out of the cabin on deck and informed Byron that he had just seen a beef-barrel float by, which he was sure had but recently been thrown overboard ; and he would make any wager that before long an English cruiser would be sighted.

Sure enough, half an hour later, a couple of sail were observed to leeward, and were already giving chase. The reader will recollect that this was a period in our national history when wars seemed always to be commencing or continuing, but never ending. We were now well into the reign of George II., the old hatred between England and Spain was very much alive, and one of the most irritating conditions of the Peace of Utrecht had forbidden England from sending more than one merchant ship a year to trade with Spanish colonies. This arrangement had clearly been broken. Then there was the celebrated incident of

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Jenkins' ear and a popular desire for war with Spain, so that Walpole's hand was forced and hostilities had begun in 1739. But, as this statesman had foretold, we were soon to find that the French would arrange a new insurrection in favour of the Stuarts, and in 1744, the very year that Anson got home after his voyage round the world, a French fleet was ready at Dunkirk with troops on board ready for invasion, when a gale sank some ships and drove others ashore.

Thus, when the French and Spaniards aboard the *Lys* noticed how near these two English ships had approached, there was no small alarm. One was clearly a two-decker, and the other a 20-gun vessel. For a time, indeed, there was a flat calm, which only increased the suspense, and the captain was for running the *Lys* ashore on Puerto Rico island when the breeze should return. But then he recollected that this would make the situation rather worse ; for the inhabitants would certainly not merely plunder the wreck, but would slit the throats of every one on board. It was therefore resolved to keep on to the northward between the two islands. That evening came a fresh breeze, but the same wind was also hurrying the two English men-of-war towards them, and the intervening space became dangerously small. The Frenchmen and Spaniards now were so certain all hope was gone that officers were busy in the cabins filling their pockets with valuables, whilst the men attired themselves in their best clothes, and many came to Byron presenting him with little lumps of gold rather than that these should fall into the hands of their captors. Night came on, a glorious full moon rose over the Caribbean, but when morning arrived the cruisers had given up the chase, and thus lost the chance of taking a ship with about two millions of dollars and a valuable cargo.



ENGLISH PRIVATEERS AND FRENCH MERCHANTMEN

This shews the English Privateers "Boscawen" and "Sheerness" capturing five Frenchmen off Martinique on July 3, 1745.
(See page 89)

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The *Lys* was amazingly lucky thus to have escaped a second time ; but she was even more fortunate still, for on 8th July she passed a headland, without incident, where on all the other days since the war there had always been one or two English privateers cruising about. The reply of France to all this menace against her trade was obviously the employment of that convoy system which was on sea revived by the British Admiralty when in the year 1917 merchant ships required protection against enemy submarines ; it was, in principle at least, the same as that method employed ashore when during the industrial strike in England of May 1926 a hundred and fifty lorry loads of food had to be convoyed by the military through the streets of London from the docks.

Early in September the *Lys*, in the company of other merchantmen, was convoyed by five French men-of-war from the West Indies across the Atlantic. But, as our captains of the Mercantile Marine found during the Great War in regard to their steam vessels, station-keeping in a big crowd is no easy matter. On the first day out from the French West Indian port there was a privateer sloop sailing to windward ready to swoop down during the night and pick off one or two of the convoy. The French commodore therefore detailed a frigate to speak to every one of his fleet and order them to close up to him during the night. The merchantmen readily obeyed, but in so doing there were some serious collisions, and at times seven or eight of them were foul of each other, with yards and gear in a terrible state of chaos, hull smashing against hull, causing terrible damage and unspeakable anxiety to the French commodore. In the meantime, the privateer impudently kept jogging along to windward, so that the commodore had to send two of his best ships after her. The privateer ignored them until fairly near,

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and then sailed coolly away, only to come back after the chasers had rejoined the flagship.

By this harassing method the frightened convoy every night kept so close to the commodore that the collisions mounted up. This so worried the captain of a fine 30-gun merchantman of Marseilles that the latter determined to get clear of the dangerous throng and hauled out a little to windward of the line. In the morning he was spotted by the commodore, who sent a frigate down to fetch the Marseilles captain aboard. Next the commodore signalled the whole convoy to close, fired a gun, hoisted a red flag at the ensign staff, and immediately afterwards had the merchant captain run up to the mainyard arm, whence he was ducked three times. After this salutary lesson in obedience, the skipper was sent back to his ship with orders to keep his flag flying all day in order to be distinguished from the rest of the convoy.

On another occasion the *Lys*, too, happened to get out of her station, when the commodore made a signal to speak the terrified captain, and then threatened that should the latter be out of his station again he would treat him in a manner similar to that which had befallen the younger man from Marseilles. But it was this rigid discipline which preserved the convoy and prevented the privateer from doing as she wished. And thus it was that every ship managed to get across the Atlantic and make the Spanish coast off Cape Ortegal on the 27th October. Four days later they had all anchored in Brest roads.

The rest of the story is briefly told. After the valuable cargo had been landed from the *Lys*, and both officers and men, who had been away from home so many long years, were allowed to go ashore, only a few men were retained as ship-keepers ; but the three English prisoners—Cheap, Hamilton and Byron—

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who had not set foot on native soil for six adventurous years, were still kept on board, ill-clad and shivering with the autumn cold ; for neither fire nor candle was allowed them. Thus from five in the evening this unhappy trio were compelled to remain in the dark. A week later they were transferred further up the river to Landernau, where they were placed on parole ; but at the end of three months an order for release arrived from Spain. They then went across land to Morlaix by horses, and by paying him in advance the skipper of a Dutch dogger agreed to sail them across to Dover ; but at the end of a long and uncomfortable passage of nine days the Dutchman refused to go into Dover. Fortunately there appeared to windward the English man-of-war *Squirrel*, who sent her boat and took them off. Thus the three were able to get ashore at the Kentish port, and then set out by post-horses for Canterbury, where Captain Cheap was too fatigued to proceed any further ; but the other two continued on to London.

Thus, long after Anson in the *Centurion* had got home with his enormous booty, these penniless three were able to arrive, having encountered some of the most trying circumstances that ever any sailormen were called upon to endure. It is, however, to be noted that not only did this not cure Byron of going to sea, but, after other voyaging, he sailed from England in 1764 and took the *Dolphin* round the world, getting back to the Downs in 1766. And before he died he rose to the rank of vice-admiral.

CHAPTER III

SEA ADVENTURERS

THE close relationship which existed between the British Government and the Court of Directors of the Honourable East India Company, especially during the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth centuries, might seem to us nowadays a little curious, until we remind ourselves that it was this wonderful and powerful corporation which was to an immense degree responsible in securing for us that vast Indian Empire. And even after the Company had lost its Indian monopoly, it still retained until the year 1834 its exclusive privilege to trade with China, when the "free-traders" came in and competition created a new zest in the shipping world, which was to be seen presently in the China clipper-ship types.

But twenty years before the British public mind had manifested itself in Parliament and shown itself distinctly adverse to this system of monopoly the East India Company was still held in high honour and doing a lucrative trade with China. Still, it was none the less harassed by vexatious impositions on the part of the local authorities at Canton. The Chinese had no affection for the "foreign devil," and yet the East India Company, following in the wake of the Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch vessels, had as far back as the year 1684 been doing commerce at Canton, and, indeed, the Company's factory existed there for a hundred and fifty years before the end came.

Now the H.E.I.C., both historically and financially,



CANTON

As it appeared at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century.

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meant a great deal to Britain. In regard to ships alone, the former had so frequently come to the Navy's aid during those long wars against Spain and France. The Company eventually became, in fact, less a gigantic trading concern than an imperial power within the British Empire. Its directors were, like its vessels, stately, even pompous, demanding and receiving the highest respect ; and every transaction was carried on with consummate dignity and unruffled routine. Thus, when such delicate occasions arose between the H.E.I.C. and the Canton authorities, the British Government would be requested to send some distinguished personage out in his official capacity and make things internationally much smoother for that wealthy and importunate corporation.

So we come to the year 1816, when the British Government had selected as " Ambassador Extraordinary " from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China, the Right Hon. Lord Amherst, who had already served in a similar diplomatic position at the court of Sicily. With Lord Amherst were to travel his personal staff, together with many valuable presents indicative of those improved British manufacturers which the new industrial age had already begun to create. Now the vessel chosen for this diplomatic expedition was H.M.S. *Alceste*, a frigate of 46 guns, which was fitted up for the reception of Lord Amherst and suite, whilst H.M. Brig *Lyra* escorted. There sailed with them the Honourable Company's East Indiaman *General Hewitt* to carry the presents.

Captain Murray Maxwell, R.N., was in command of *Alceste* and senior officer. We need not waste much time over the voyage out. The three ships left Spithead on 9th February in the year just mentioned and, having a favourable wind, reached Madeira in nine

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days, but remained there only twelve hours. The usual ceremonies were observed when crossing the line. Whilst still in the South Atlantic, *Lyra* and *General Hewitt* were sent off to the Cape of Good Hope, whilst the *Alceste* sailed across to Rio de Janeiro. This was the year when Napoleon Bonaparte still had three years to live, and there existed a ridiculous fear at Rio that some day the French genius might escape from St Helena and, with a fair wind, come sailing along to Brazil.

After leaving the South American coast, the *Alceste* picked up the westerlies between Lat. 36° and 39° south, passed to the north of Tristan d'Acunha and anchored in Table Bay on the 18th April, refitted at Simon's Bay, and left again early in May. She found the brave westerlies in Lat. 38° to 40° , and began running her easting down with the usual boisterous weather and heavy seas, sighting those lonely islands St Paul and Amsterdam, afterwards steering north-east in accordance with the sailing-ship practice of whalers and others, so that Java was sighted on the 8th June. Here, lying in Anger roads, was the *Lyra*, and the *General Hewitt* was seen off Cape Nicholas. For the *Alceste* was a fast frigate, whereas those old East Indiamen were too solid, substantial and full-lined ever to be called swift. Thus it had been possible for the frigate to have gone right across to Rio, and even then she almost overtook her consorts at the Cape. In ninety-two days under sail she had traversed fourteen thousand miles at an average of over 150 miles a day, which was good going in those days.

From Java the *Alceste* and *General Hewitt* sailed by way of the Straits of Banka, and so up the China Sea, *Lyra* having been sent on ahead, and all three anchored among the Hong Kong islands until a message was received from the Emperor that the British Embassy



THE MOUTH OF THE PETHO RIVER
Shewing the Forts at the entrance in the year 1861.

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would be received. This having been obtained, the voyage was continued north and through the Yellow Sea into the Gulf of Chi-li to the mouth of the Peiho river, where they anchored. The ambassador and his suite landed *en route* for Peking on 9th August, with full ceremony, the British squadron being dressed in colours, Royal Standard flying, yards manned and a salute of nineteen guns from each ship.

We can pass over the intervening months whilst the ambassador was ashore. The squadron did a considerable amount of cruising, examining the Korean coast, during which time the *Alceste's* sailing-master, Mr Gawthrop, who had also been the ship's navigator, died. But the "ship's reckoning" during his illness had been kept by the chaplain. It was only about seventy-five years since Commodore Anson had burst into the western seas, and a considerable part were still to our nineteenth-century ancestors as the Antarctic area is to us nowadays. Discovered territory was therefore named *Alceste* Island, Amherst Isles, Lyra Island and so on.

Now in January, the year now being 1817, Lord Amherst having concluded his mission and returned on board the *Alceste*, sailed away from China, and first called at the Philippines to visit Manila, and then unescorted started off for England. It was from this stage that the *Alceste's* adventures become so full of immense interest. We must bear in mind that the East Indian waters to the south of the Philippines were still badly surveyed, and the charts far from reliable. The *Alceste* was careful to avoid the many rocks and shoals lying to the west of these islands and off the northern Borneo coast; so that by the middle of February she had got well clear into the usual track, and had passed the western end of Borneo. The latest surveys and sailing directions had been carefully

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examined, and at daylight on 17th February Gaspar Island was sighted, the intention being to pass through Gaspar Straits.

Every precaution was being taken, men were in the chains on both sides using the lead, and there were others on the look-out not merely at the masthead, but the yardarms and bowsprit end. Captain, master and officer-of-the-watch had been on deck all night, the soundings had been found to correspond with the figures on the charts, and the directions of clearing all dangers had been scrupulously followed, when all of a sudden at 7.30 a.m. the *Alceste* startled everybody by driving up with a terrible crash on to a hidden reef. No words were needed to indicate that the frigate had done the most perilous thing in the whole of her existence, and an immediate examination showed that on each side of the rocks the water was as deep as ten or seventeen fathoms.

The best bower anchor was let go to prevent her coming off suddenly and sinking ; for the pumps were abandoned as useless to contend with the inpouring stream. Boats were hoisted out, and Lieutenant Hoppner was sent with the barge and cutter in order to land the ambassador, his suite and all who were not essential to the ship. The accident had happened on Pulo Leat, and it was more than a three-mile row for the boats to land on the island's nearest part. Now it was obvious enough to Captain Maxwell and his brother officers that whatever they did, the *Alceste* would never again be seen under her cloud of canvas coming over the ocean : she was doomed as certainly as any dying man. It remained now only to save lives and all the property possible.

The latter was no easy matter, seeing that all provisions and stores were under water and that the tide inside had risen considerably. But a certain amount of



AN EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY EAST INDIAMAN
The "Thames," 1424 tons.

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food was floating about, divers salvaged some more, and by means of a raft, as well as the boats, much was taken ashore several miles away. Here the jungle growth was cleared for a space, and all hands under the shade of tall trees bivouacked. In the meanwhile, the sea kept lifting and dropping the unfortunate *Alceste* on to the rocks, so that it became necessary to cut away her topmasts, but in so doing two men had been hurt. Had the scene ashore been less ominous all would have been greatly amused ; for there were a chaos of parliamentary robes, Chinese costumes, ruined books, tar-stained jackets and check shirts.

Very little drinking water had been brought off from the ship, and parties returned from exploring the island in a vain effort to find a well by digging. Captain Maxwell, after coming ashore and conferring with Lord Amherst, decided that as the boats would not be able to carry half the company, his Excellency and suite should proceed south across the wide Java Sea to Batavia or whatever part of Java Island they could reach, and then send vessels to bring off the others. The current being favourable and this being the time of the north-west monsoon, there was every likelihood of the boats reaching Java within three days, and that within about a fortnight other craft would come back from Batavia. In command of the boats went Lieutenant Hoppner, one other officer of the same rank, a midshipman, a marine officer and a guard as protection against the Malay pirates who roamed these seas and were always a source of danger to a sailing ship in difficulties.

Forty-seven people thus went away, well provisioned with both plenty of wine and beer for several days. There remained behind two hundred men and boys and one female. Captain Maxwell now shifted the camp to the top of the hill where the air was cooler and

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more pure, but also more suitable for defence in case there should be any attack from pirates. The immediate locality abounded in myriads of ants and a number of snakes, scorpions, centipedes, as well as other unpleasant creatures ; but by setting fire to the underwood at the summit a good clearance was made. At the top of this hill the stock of provisions was deposited in a suitable place by some masses of rock. As to the *Alceste*, a party was still there trying to rescue more provisions and arms.

But good fortune came in two ways. First of all, after having digged down to a depth of twenty feet, some water, though rather muddy, was found ; and secondly, there fell a heavy shower of rain which was joyously caught by spreading sheets and table-cloths. And then in the morning Captain Maxwell ordered all hands before him and reminded them that by the naval regulations every man was still answerable for his conduct even if the ship had gone, and that discipline would be continued with the same if not greater rigour. At the same time he promised to recommend to the Admiralty those men who should distinguish themselves by their good conduct. Further, he added, all food should be served out sparingly, but with absolute equality to all ranks and ratings.

Each man had his daily pint of water ; there was great activity between ship and shore, and thence between shore and summit of hill, getting out and transporting things from that watery hold. But one early morning there came a sudden and unwelcome surprise, when the party working aboard the *Alceste* found themselves surrounded by those interesting Malay proas which I always look upon as exhibiting that rig which is intermediate between the oldest Egyptian squaresail and the fore-and-aft lateen. For the proa with her narrow but very long quadrilateral



FORT MAXWELL

Officers and crew from the wrecked "Alceste" on the island of Pulo Leat. The look-out tree is on the left, and the larder on the right guarded by a sentry.

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sail, boused well down at the tack with the peak correspondingly high, thus sets on her tripod mast a kind of lugsail.

But the astounded ratings of the *Alceste* were less concerned with this line of thought than the realisation that the Malay crews were both numerous and well armed. Here were those dreaded pirates at last, whereas the British sailors had not so much as a musket for defence. There was only one thing to be done, and that must be carried out quickly. Just in time the latter leapt into the boat which was alongside, and pulled hard for the shore, being chased nearly as quickly by the pirates. But, fortunately, two other of *Alceste's* boats came rowing out from the island, whereupon the pirates gave up the chase and returned to take possession of the wrecked frigate.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries you will find these Malay rovers scarcely ever failing to appear soon after a sailing ship had got into trouble. They were enterprising, ruthless, excellent seamen, and quite conscious of their own power. After a while Captain Maxwell's look-out reported that the pirates, armed with spears, were landing about two miles down the coast, though, as was afterwards more strictly discovered, they had really come ashore on some rocks nearby and deposited there the plunder. In fact, they kept up a long series of journeys to and from the frigate for this purpose.

But Captain Maxwell soon had his plans going ; his men quickly forgot their hunger, thirst and fatigue now that this new menace of pirates had appeared. The threat was met with that wonderful staunch spirit which in our countrymen manifests itself only when everything looks black and desperate. No sooner had the order been given for every sailor to arm himself as best he could manage, than they set to work, making

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the most extraordinary weapons. Trees were cut down to fashion pike-staves ; there was a hurried sharpening of small swords, dirks, knives, chisels and even nails, each of which was secured to the end of these poles. Some men were busy hardening the end of the wood in the fire, so that the point would do at least some damage.

Out of their whole armoury they were able to gather not more than about a dozen cutlasses ; the marines had about thirty muskets and bayonets, but they possessed only about seventy-five ball cartridges. Fortunately, after the ship had struck, some loose powder had been preserved from the upper-deck guns : the marines, with their usual adaptive ability, managed to hammer round their buttons and roll up pieces of broken bottles in cartridges, and this produced a kind of langrage which would be quite useful at close quarters. The ship's carpenter, too, with his mates, felled trees and enclosed the camp by breastworks most effectually.

When evening came and all hands were mustered, they afforded an amusing but determined example of what can be done by improvisation : yet what was lacking in genuine weapons more than equally became compensated by the keen fighting spirit of the men. Thus, for instance, one poor fellow, who had been injured by the falling masts and was unable to leave his hammock swung between two trees, had carefully been busy with a bit of rope-yarn " fishing " in true nautical manner the blade of a razor between two sticks. " I can't stand on my feet," he explained, " but if any of these fellows come within reach of my hammock, I'll mark 'em all right."

Officers and men were marshalled into their proper divisions and companies, and the whole discipline under Captain Maxwell stands out in striking contrast to the behaviour of the *Wager's* men under Captain Cheap, as

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related in the previous chapter. The *Alceste's* commanding officer now drew up various posts to be guarded ; thus one officer and his men were deputed to defend the boats during the night. The dark hours passed without attack, and in the morning some of the proas were seen approaching the place where the *Alceste's* boats were moored. It was thought at first that the pirates possibly wished to communicate on friendly terms ; so an officer with four men was sent to row slowly towards them, at the same time waving the bough of a tree as a signal corresponding to the white flag. But the pirates were in no such mood, and were merely making a reconnaissance of the position.

But when the barge, cutter and gig were sent with armed parties to regain possession of the *Alceste*, the pirates, who had left about eighty of their people aboard with a couple of proas alongside, now made sail and slipped away. Those who were busy on the rocks threw their plunder into the craft and were soon off ; those of the eighty, however, stopped just to set the frigate on fire before departing. Still, if it was sad for the British seamen and marines to see flames bursting out of every port and their fine ship quickly enveloped in a cloud of smoke, yet this burning of her upper works and decks had the good effect of allowing everything buoyant to float up from below, and thus an addition was made to the number of articles salvaged.

But that night there came an alarm to the camp, which well tested their condition of preparedness. A marine, doing sentry, suddenly saw a figure move and most certainly advancing towards him. Thus convinced beyond all doubt, the marine quite rightly fired his musket, since the other, after having been repeatedly hailed, made no answer. Judge then of the alarm which spread through the camp and summoned every man to his post. It was a splendid rehearsal—

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yes—but hardly more ; for that moving figure with hands and feet turned out to be nothing more dangerous than a large baboon ! Nor was this an isolated incident, for whilst the sentries were keeping their guard at the well, where a good fire burned because of the mosquitoes, there was often a sudden fright when these animals' black faces were suddenly illumined by the firelight as they moved behind the trees. Altogether those were quite anxious, nerve-trying hours.

The wreck was still smoking, yet affording release to more valuable goods. Thus on Sunday morning a service in the mess-tent ashore was just concluding when the good news was received that the wreck party had recovered some flour, a few cases of wine and a cask of beer. The tidings of the last mentioned, and the further information that a pint would be immediately served out to each man, called forth three cheers from thankful and thirsty throats. During the ensuing days boarding pikes and muskets were also brought off from the wreck. Such articles, too, as pewter basins and jugs and some lead were melted down and converted into serviceable musket ammunition by the gunner.

It was encouraging, too, that a second well with ample water had been made near the foot of the hill. This was followed a little later by another exciting incident at dawn, when a couple of proas each with a canoe astern were seen close in towards the cove where the *Alceste's* boats were moored ; but the guard that night was under Lieutenant Hay, and at once he took barge, cutter and gig towards the enemy. The latter were compelled to sail off in such a hurry that they had to cut the canoes adrift. The pace was keen, the British cutter and gig were outdistanced, but the barge gained and closed the pirates, who now showed every sign of determined resistance. Their swivel guns they fired into the barge, but, fortunately, without

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effect. Hay had the only musket and used it, but now the Malays were throwing javelins and darts which entered the boat, yet not one man was wounded. The moment had arrived when the British Jack Tar was able to use the chance for which he had been longing ; and before much time had elapsed three of the enemy had been shot, a fourth knocked down, two more were taken prisoners, of whom one was severely wounded, whilst five more leapt overboard and were drowned.

It had been a sharp, if short encounter, for the pirates were in ferocious mind, and one Malay who was not quite dead was being removed in the barge with a view of saving him, when he grasped a cutlass, and there was a fierce struggle before it could be wrenched from his hands. A few minutes later he died. Now of the two proas one went down almost immediately, having evidently been sunk by her own people before the inevitable ; but the other craft fired a parting shot, bore up round the north end of the island and so made her escape. As to the canoes, these were captured, brought ashore and found of great use. But in regard to this matter there had been a very narrow escape from tragedy : for one of Captain Maxwell's officers still on the island, having observed a canoe drifting by with the current, promptly swam out and was nearly up to his object when a great shark was seen hovering around him about to strike. Those on shore hesitated to shout lest the news should unnerve him, but it was with a great sense of relief that they watched him at last climb safely into the little craft.

Now this typical engagement between the proas and the naval boats did a great deal of good to this seafaring community in their island home. It broke up the monotony, it showed they were more than a match for notorious pirates in spite of the latter's unprepossessing appearance with their bronzed bodies, gaping nostrils

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and scowling murderous countenances. Of the two prisoners, both remained sullen and expected to be tortured before being put to death. The younger one was especially surprised to find his wounds being dressed by *Alceste's* surgeon, but both were gratified at receiving food and good treatment. There was a problem, however, in regard to that injured man. His knee-joint had been penetrated and the bones considerably damaged, so that the surgeon was inclined to amputate the leg, and under ordinary circumstances would thus have acted in regard to any white man ; but it would always have been impossible to have convinced the Malay that the object was not to torture, and thus should any of the *Alceste's* people fall into the pirates' hands, the latter might retaliate by cutting off the Englishmen's limbs. It was therefore decided to instal the man in a little wigwam, which was now built for him. He was given a blanket, the other prisoner was allowed to look after him, the surgeon continued his attention, but for the rest nature was allowed to take its own course. Perhaps under the circumstances this was as well, for the man did not die.

But now another piece of news was reported to Captain Maxwell. There coming across from the direction of Banka were fourteen proas and small craft, which were being watched with more than ordinary interest. Had they been sent out from Batavia as the relief ? Presently they anchored and their crews came ashore down the coast. Captain Maxwell accordingly had the ambassador's flag displayed on the look-out rock, and an officer with Union Jack proceeded with some of his companions along the beach to meet these Malays, who also advanced with a flag-bearer. Everything seemed quite satisfactory, for the Malays now laid down their arms, and the British did the same. This was followed by handshaking, and the conducting of

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the visitors to Captain Maxwell, where the Malays laid their flag at that officer's feet. There were cheers, a warm welcome and manifestations of joy at this arrival of assistance. But the pleasure was distinctly premature, for these visitors were merely nomads of the sea employed in gathering a special kind of seaweed found off those islands. In spite of this disappointment it was hoped that negotiations would induce the strangers to transport to Java those of the community for whom there was not enough space in the *Alceste's* boats.

Some of the British officers, with their men armed, went on board the senior Malay ship, but all hope of a good result from this visit was banished on the following day when the Malays caught sight of that scarcely visible frigate wreck, which they at once began to plunder. This forthwith changed any feeling of friendliness, and they realised the whole situation and why a band of men in uniforms with colours and naval accessories were encamped on that island. What was to be done now? Captain Maxwell deemed it inadvisable to send his boats and attack; for, after driving the Malays away for a time, it would certainly put the visitors on their guard against a surprise night attack which presently might be the necessary tactics. And the only articles which could be looted from the wreck were the iron work and copper bolts, to which they were welcome.

On the other hand, a certain anxiety was being born in Captain Maxwell's mind. The period when a relief ship from Batavia should have arrived had already lapsed. Had Hoppner and his party fallen on bad luck, so as not to have reached Java island? Had they all been murdered by pirates on the way? It was by no means improbable, though there would have been a pretty tough struggle first. Every hour increased

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Captain Maxwell's uneasiness, seeing that the length of stay on this island must be limited by the dwindling stock of provisions ; the day was already in sight when he would have to take his men once more afloat and move on. Measures were accordingly adopted to repair the launch and construct a substantial raft in order to afford additional transportation.

This decision proved its wisdom by the arrival from the north of fourteen more proas, whose crews joined in breaking up the remains of the wreck. During the night a still greater force came, so that at daylight, whilst some men were left working on the *Alceste*, about twenty of the biggest proas now advanced towards the British landing-place. It looked as if something was about to happen, for the proas were firing their guns, there was a great beating of gongs, and the Malays were raising hideous yells, till finally the fleet anchored in line about two hundred yards from the cove, whilst other craft had worked round at the back of the island into a creek.

The obvious inference was that an attack from both sides was being planned with a view to surrounding the British. That elder Malay prisoner, who was in attendance on the wounded man, had been incautiously trusted whilst cutting some wood for the fire, but on hearing the yells he ran off into the wood with his hatchet and escaped. The frigate's commanding officer realised that the climax was now not far off, and acted accordingly. There is something about this island life with its resourceful hearty sailors and naval system which must appeal to every romantic mind that remembers the fiction books of his school-boy days, and the story loses nothing merely because it happens also to be true. But had we been actually one of those officers we should have been feeling a certain amount of uncertainty as to the eventual outcome. This warn-

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ing, however, was accepted in the proper spirit, and the necessary strategy put into force. Thus every man was under arms, the party covering the boats was strengthened, for this was the weakest position ; if the enemy should capture or destroy all means of transport then sooner or later the British would be starved into submission. That is always the drawback of an island home, whether it be for a small community, as in this case, or for a large nation, as in the case of the United Kingdom.

There was a temporary suspense when it was observed that no attempt was made to land, so an officer and party were sent off in one of those two captured canoes to investigate the Malay intentions. Waving to them in a friendly manner, he saw one of their boats approach containing a crew of fierce-looking men armed with crooked daggers, but little could be made of their attitude save that they coveted a shirt and pair of trousers which the owner refused to deliver. Captain Maxwell now hit upon another idea, which consisted of sending a letter to the chief authority at Muntok, which was then a small settlement on the north-west corner of that neighbouring but much bigger island of Banka. Muntok is still the capital of this Dutch island with its hills and moist climate where bananas and other fruits grow quickly in the sultry heat. If only this letter could be despatched containing a request that the governor would send out one or two vessels, with bread, salt provisions and ammunition as well, perhaps the whole difficulty would be solved speedily.

So the message was written, an officer again went out in the canoe and once more a Malay craft met him. The letter was handed over, the word Muntok or Minto was repeatedly pronounced until the pirates seemed to understand ; the direction of that port was demonstrated by hand so that there should not be the slightest

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mistake. Signs were also made by showing them one-dollar coin that many of these should be their reward when the Malays returned. Captain Maxwell had little expectation that this would be carried out, but he was resolved to try ; he was therefore scarcely surprised to note presently that not one of the proas set off towards Banka. And now the piratical force seemed to have become augmented, for there were proas and craft of all sizes, making a fleet of fifty, the largest of them with twenty men and the smallest with seven. They had practically given up working on the wreck, and it was on the island that they guessed the real booty must be located. Clearly enough the pirates with that considerable force were now beginning a blockade on the same principle, at least, as the Germans attempted with their submarines during the Great War.

But the Malays were hourly making the operation more stringent, especially at high water, for this enabled them to come still closer to that cove where the boats of the island sheltered, and might be expected to emanate and escape them any moment. In addition to this, during the afternoon the piratical intellect became more subtle, and one craft tried to indicate that all the Malays with the exception of themselves were extremely hostile and intended to make an attack that night ; the advice was tendered that some of the Malays should therefore be allowed ashore, and to sleep at the top of the hill as protection. Needless to say this obviously treacherous offer was rejected and the blockade still continued.

That evening, when Captain Maxwell was holding his usual inspection of his people before the night watches went to their posts, he took the opportunity to make a speech and warn them that an attack before dawn was probable. "I do not wish to conceal our real state," he remarked, "because I think there is not

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a man here who is afraid to face any sort of danger. We are now strongly fenced in, and our position in all respects so good, that, armed as we are, we ought to make a formidable defence against even regular troops : what then would be thought of us, if we allowed ourselves to be surprised by a set of naked savages ? ” And he further encouraged his men by reminding them that whereas they possessed only seventy-five ball cartridges when first they landed, there were now sixteen hundred. It would be 200 British against 500 of the enemy, but what of that ? If the pike-men stood firm, the volley of musketry would then throw the enemy into confusion and “ we’ll sally out among them, chase them into the water, and ten to one but we secure their vessels. Let every man, therefore, be on the alert with his arms in his hands ; and, should these barbarians this night attempt our hill, I trust we shall convince them that they are dealing with Britons.”

This address, appealing to the patriotism and emotions of the men, was received with wild cheers, which went echoing through the woods and down to the picket at the boat cove. Night fell, and the enemy were noticed to be making light signals to their friends who had crept round to the back of the island. The hours sped past, every sailor or marine was longing for an opportunity to get at the foe, and then, after their meal whilst the guards at various posts were being extra vigilant, the main body of defence lay down and slept on their arms. Once during the night there came a false alarm, but it had the effect of showing the preparedness of all.

Daylight came and still the pirates were in the same position, but ten more proas had arrived under cover of darkness to strengthen this already powerful blockade, and no one on the island could deny that the situation was becoming hourly more critical. In view of either

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starvation or merciless cruelty which would certainly come, Captain Maxwell was contemplating a sudden night attack, the tactics being to use the four boats, all well armed, steal out and capture by boarding some of the proas, then, having manned these with the boats' crews, repeat the attack on other proas until the enemy was beaten or dispersed. By this means it might become possible to get away in the captured proas to Java.

This seemed to be the soundest of schemes, even if it would mean the loss of valuable lives ; for to move that raft in the presence of craft armed with swivel guns was out of the question. Every one, notwithstanding the crisis, was in good humour and buoyant optimism : there was a courageous but calm determination to rush forth and cut the enemy out, or fall in the attempt. In such occasions as this success depends not on stressing the grave results of possible failure but on preserving a strong, firm attitude of confidence in the result. It was still the forenoon, and there was plenty of time to complete the final preparations before the next night should return.

But just about mid-day the dramatic and unexpected happened at the very climax of interest. One of the officers had mounted the look-out tree, which was the loftiest on the hill, and suddenly descried a long way to the southward a sail, which, however, seemed bigger than that of a Malay vessel. This announcement caused a strange hush to come over the community, and the buzz of conversation suddenly ended as every eye followed a signalman with his telescope mounting the tree for further confirmation or rejection. But just then the strange sail vanished from sight, for a dark squall enveloped the horizon and not a thing more could be seen. Thus passed twenty tense minutes, when the vessel again emerged, but more distinctly.

" She's a squarc-rigger ! " came the excited report.

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“ Sure of that ? ”

“ Quite certain. It’s either a brig or a ship and she’s standing towards the island under all sail.”

That settled matters, and a wave of wonderful joy spread over all. Nothing so gratifying had happened for a long while ; it was like waking up from a nightmare into a glorious spring morn. Colours were hoisted on the highest tree branch so that if by chance she should be only a passing stranger she could yet not fail to see. But the pirates were not slow to recognise what was happening, and they signalled the rest of the Malay fleet by firing a gun. Now the tide was fast ebbing, and Captain Maxwell formed the plan of making an unexpected rush to the edge of the reef so as to get the enemy under fire. The pirates apparently suspected this design, for just as our seamen and marines came running out from the mangroves, the nearest pirate proa fired her swivel gun, but without doing harm. Simultaneously, the whole fleet got under way, set sail and weathered the rocks. But it was well that thus the enemy had been frightened off and the blockade raised, for the pirates could have continued, being able to cut the British communications, inasmuch as the arriving square-rigger, because of wind and current, could not bring up nearer than twelve miles away.

The gig was now sent off and the visitor was found to be the Honourable East India Company’s cruiser *Ternate*, which had been sent out by Lord Amherst with Hoppner on board. The light gig was able to row back to the island, though the East Indiaman’s cutter spent nine hours trying to struggle against the current and had to give up the contest.

But the story was learned of how the *Alceste’s* barge and cutter had fared after leaving this island with the ambassadorial party. They had sailed south through

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the Gaspard Straits, keeping three or four miles from Banka Island, and next morning there was a fair W.N.W. moderate wind followed by squalls and rain, but afterwards a calm. This necessitated rowing which gradually brought general fatigue, for the marines succeeded the seamen and the passengers also had to do a spell of work. The journey had begun on Wednesday evening, and by Saturday provisions were already running short. By nine that night every one was exhausted with pulling at the oars and they anchored, only to be rolled about in the heavy swell till the passage was resumed on the Sunday morning. A favourable breeze came along which enabled them to close the Java shore, where they came alongside the British ship *Princess Charlotte*, lying in Batavia Roads, and were hospitably received.

But to return to Fort Maxwell, as the sojourners on Pulo Leat had named their abode; all was now bustle and activity, getting ready for transhipment those goods which had been saved from the wrecked frigate, and there arrived, too, from the *Ternate*, a couple of boats with a 12-pounder carronade which might be required at any hour against the pirates. Wonders in organisation had been performed during the nineteen days spent on that island. Measuring but six miles by five, and situated only just below the equator between Banka and Borneo, it seemed to afford no sustenance apart from some fruits and oysters. All the food from the wreck had, however, been distributed with the utmost care, and it is the best evidence of good management that in spite of the heavy rains and fierce rays from the vertical sun there was not one man who was taken sick. Moreover, all who when they landed were in a state of bad health, including some really bad cases, had in the meantime recovered with the exception of one marine. Of course, there was the usual "bad

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hat," or " King's hard bargain," of the party ; but this troublesome character on the third day had deserted and never been seen again. He may have ended his days after being bitten by a serpent in the woods, or the Malays may have captured him.

The *Ternate's* boats had found an unshaven, somewhat ragged family, but this improvised village with its wigwams neatly fashioned out of branches, its canvas tents, its armoury and sailor-like tidiness was at the last left with a certain amount of regret.

Romantically situated on that island summit, under the shade of tall, beautiful green trees, with the splashes of naval blue and the scarlet uniforms of the marines showing up against the dark background, every man was able to take away in his memory a unique recollection. Thursday and early Friday were spent in embarking officers and men aboard the *Ternate*. It was an amusing sight when the raft carrying the *Alceste's* cow, four officers and forty-six men set a sail, and after a somewhat wet passage of eight hours reached the *Ternate* in darkness. Whatever could be carried was taken off ; but all else that was left behind and likely to benefit the pirates was made into a bonfire.

Life on Pulo Leat, in spite of its alarms and interruptions, had been continued as nearly as possible in accord with naval ship fashion. The men had their allowance of rum, and the officers their two glasses of wine at dinner. Notwithstanding all the Malays, the old Saturday night custom of the sea—"sweethearts and wives"—was drunk just the same. It takes a great deal to break down a sailor's conservatism : it needs more than pirates and shipwreck to upset a British routine which has been honoured by time through generations and years of wars.

Before finally quitting the island to the occupation

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of its baboons and monkeys, Captain Maxwell had marked with oil and blacking on the rocks the date of departure, in case any ship should come on rescue work ; and so that Friday the whole community bade farewell. There was not room for every one aboard the little *Ternate*, but the weather being fine some of the party remained in the boats and kept company with the ship, arriving on the following Sunday at Batavia, and landed the next day. The *Princess Charlotte* had sailed from Batavia the day after Lord Amherst reached her, but she had spent about three weeks beating against wind and current, and got no further than the south-east of Banka. The barge had then been sent off with meat and water, but on reaching Pulo Leat (by which time the island had been deserted ten days) a large fleet of pirate proas were found once more at anchor. At once the latter gave chase, the barge was compelled to make sail, but the pirates were rowing furiously as well as sailing and gaining fast ; so the barge had to throw overboard beef and water. Matters began to look serious, and it was certainly to be a fight to a finish when luckily there came a heavy squall which necessitated the light proas lowering their sails, though the barge carried on and was able thus to escape.

Batavia was, in those days, one of the most unhealthy spots in the world, and has been the death of many a sailor who has gone ashore to forget the inside of his ship for a brief carousal. Its suffocating heat and lack of hygiene so close to the equator, its swampy foundation and filth, had gained for it a notoriety. Fortunately there had been found comfortable quarters for the men in the more healthy upper town of Weltevreden, and about a month later all the *Alceste's* party, including Lord Amherst, embarked in the British ship *Caesar* and set sail for England.

This homeward voyage threatened to be somewhat

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monotonous after what this band of brothers had experienced, but one incident occurred which entirely upset that theory. One morning the *Caesar* got on fire in the after store-room close to the magazine. Flames were seen coming forth, but there was no panic. Fortunately, too, it happened to be washing day and the buckets were ready at hand. Every one worked hard, and in three-quarters of an hour the fire was put out. It had caused serious damage, but had the event happened during the night hours and reached some combustibles and oil in the immediate vicinity, the *Alceste's* men would have been for a second time without a ship. It is extraordinary how careless some hands were in those old wooden ships. One of the most famous warships ever built during the seventeenth century had been destroyed by a petty officer's negligence. This was the historic *Sovereign of the Seas* in 1696. The *Caesar* had nearly attained a similar end by the fool of a man who with a naked light was pumping off spirits in order to preserve the body of a parrot which had died the night before and he wished to bring home to England !

After calling at Simon's Bay, the *Caesar* anchored at St Helena for a few days, where Lord Amherst, Captain Maxwell and others went ashore and were presented to the exile Napoleon Bonaparte. After the ship reached Portsmouth a court-martial was held to inquire into the *Alceste's* loss, but Captain Maxwell was acquitted on the ground that the sunken rock in the Gaspar Straits was then unknown to hydrographers. Thus the story of these sea adventurers ended happily ; but this was by no means the last sailing ship to be lost by striking an uncharted reef in the Java Sea during that same century. The wonder really is that disasters in that area were not more numerous.

PART II

THE BROTHERHOOD OF DARING



AN "M" CLASS DESTROYER
Model of H. M. S. "Mastiff," the fastest vessel afloat at the beginning of the Great War.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRUE SPIRIT

DURING the Great War, when every section of our seafarers, professional and amateur, representative of the Royal Navy, Mercantile Marine, Fishing Fleets and Yacht Clubs, were engaged afloat for one big purpose, there was brought into existence with all these thousands of ships and men the most vast maritime brotherhood which had ever been created since the beginning of time. We are, even nearly a decade after hostilities, living still so close to those anxious years that it is impossible for this generation really to appreciate the full glamour of the wonderful achievements ; yet it is no exaggeration to suggest that never in our island history had so many noble deeds been performed afloat in so brief a space of time. Let us, therefore, before records fade and the memories of living men become blurred, bring out from remote recesses some of these stories that they may inspire others in maintaining the wonderful sea tradition.

Sometimes one might almost wish, because the sea is merciless and greater than the sailor and his ship, that by common consent warfare should be confined to land operations. But if such an agreement had ever been made by humanity the whole course of progress would have been obviously developed along the narrowest limitations. There would have been precious little overseas expansion and no such institution as the British Empire. Rather it is because of the personal and national characteristics which are bred by the association of winds, waves and coast that the seafaring

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sodality has to us at least become one of the most valued possessions. At all time this unique and highly specialised fraternity is at the service of humanity, but in time of war this expression reaches its summit in acts of gallantry, unselfishness and obedience to orders. Dangers become multiplied, but golden opportunities present themselves to show that the examples of the past are the inspiration of the present sailor race of men.

In spite of all that has been written, how little we know of those many marvellous achievements which made up so perfect a mosaic on the walls of fame ! Event followed incident with such breathless speed that there was little enough opportunity to report, let alone remember them ourselves ; and often, too, the outstanding example of bravery or patience was swallowed up in the major consideration of strategy or tactics. There were, however, so many occasions when the ordinary perils of gales, or tides, or fogs became magnified by the conditions of war into something utterly different. Few moments are so full of anxiety for all concerned as when a naval force is manœuvring at high speed in thick weather : it is then that the seaman-like character is to receive its keenest test. Thus, for instance, on a certain day quite soon after that memorable August 1914 began, there were some of our light cruisers and destroyers carrying out a certain operation towards the German coast when a dense fog suddenly came down and spoiled everything.

The British senior officer realised that the enemy were not more than twenty miles away, but in spite of that proximity the signals had to be made by wireless for the squadron and flotilla to return. At a particular moment the alteration of course was to begin, but the speed of twenty knots was maintained. The captain of one destroyer was on the bridge steering in the churned wake of his next ahead, and the time had

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arrived when the former reckoned that in obedience to the wireless signal he should now turn eight points. This he did, but promptly collided with a light cruiser which was steaming in the column abreast. The shock was terrific, the destroyer's way was temporarily snubbed, but some of the crew, both in destroyer and cruiser, were killed outright. Fortunately, there was no further collision from those coming up astern, which quite well might have happened : but the cruiser sped on and vanished into the fog. The destroyer's bow had been so badly crumpled up that it dropped off into the sea, though the forward bulkhead held.

Presently another destroyer came along and tried to tow her damaged sister, but the conditions permitted only cautious speed, and they drifted down to the Terschelling Lightship on that tide. In the meantime, the light cruiser had reported her accident, and there came, by wireless, instructions to the damaged destroyer's skipper that as soon as a superior enemy force should appear he was to sink his ship. The situation, considering all things, was pretty desperate ; but the senior officer had a systematic search made for this lame duck, cruisers and destroyers seeking over the North Sea in the hopes of saving the craft before it was too late. Eventually the destroyer in distress was located, but by now the weather had changed to a gale, as it frequently does after fog. Towing became a most delicate matter, hawsers were passed but snapped like bits of yarn, and it seemed scarcely possible that the vessel could ever reach home : any minute, too, the German battle-cruisers might reveal their smoke and mastheads on the horizon. Such was the state of the weather that it took seven hours before the senior cruiser was able to get a wire to the destroyer and everything ready for towing again. The destroyer was rolling quite forty degrees, she was down by the head,

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and her own commanding officer never expected her to keep afloat much longer in those heavy seas ; but he had sent below for the mess tables, which would serve as rafts. Finally, the wire had been secured round the gun-platform, the cruiser went slow ahead, and port was reached after intensely anxious hours. The Germans before all this was over had begun to suspect something had happened, and actually sent out into the North Sea their battle-cruisers, though happily they never found what they wanted. They did, however, cleverly call up by wireless the senior British cruiser and inquired her position in code. Needless to say the cruiser made no reply, and at the end of the third day she was able to hand her charge over to a tug, so that the destroyer could be at once docked and begin her repairs. It had been a narrow escape both from the sea and the enemy, and not a wink of sleep did the destroyer's worried captain obtain until the fourth day.

One of the most amusing and successful bits of bluff occurred in the Heligoland Bight a few months after this incident. A British submarine was patrolling through those waters maintaining a constant vigil for the High Seas Fleet to come out. Now, by a bit of bad luck, the submarine broke down, and you can imagine for yourself what it felt like thus to be completely inactive so close to the enemy's base. But the submarine's captain was in the tradition of resourceful seamen, who utilise dangers for making good. All that afternoon he had been watching from his periscope, whilst submerged, an unsuspecting German steam trawler at work with her trawl down. She had come out from Geestemunde two days before, but now the submarine hailed the German skipper and ordered him to send a boat alongside. The joke of it all was that the skipper unsuspectingly took her for a German U-boat and obeyed.

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There were nine men besides the trawler skipper, and they had a first-class surprise ; for the boat was promptly captured, the trawler was taken possession of, eight of the Germans were put aboard the submarine, whilst the other two with a party of Englishmen under a lieutenant now formed the new crew. A line was passed to the incapacitated submarine, and so she was towed all the way across the North Sea, until the coast of Norfolk was reached, off Cromer, where a destroyer took over and brought her safely into Harwich. The nett result of this adventure was that besides saving a valuable British naval unit and obtaining a great deal of useful information from the fishing crew, there was a free gift of a steel trawler, which could be employed for mine-sweeping or on anti-submarine work against her late countrymen. So her name was changed and she soon began her fresh duties.

And whilst we are thinking of submarines and trawlers let us refer to an incident which occurred, curiously, on the very day preceding the above event. It happened that I was serving in the early summer of this year 1915 on the Firth of Forth, and knew the officers concerned. Our mother ship was H.M.S. *Vulcan*, then commanded by Captain V. H. S. Haggard, R.N., a relative of the distinguished novelist. Here, at Leith, were a number of those small C-class submarines which were ready to motor out into the Forth should German forces ever approach. But day followed day in wearisome monotony, whilst further along the Scottish coast U-boats were sinking our own fishing trawlers. And then a brain-wave came over the Forth, and a new enthusiasm swept into the *Vulcan*. Here was a scheme for employing those C-submarines against the enemy's U-boats. The details were worked out by Captain Haggard. There followed a month's secret series of rehearsals, in which each of the Leith

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submarine flotilla was exercised under actual conditions, until at last, one June day, something big was to happen.

Now among these keen young submarine commanding officers was Lieut.-Commander H. D. Edwards, R.N., a charming and courteous brother of the sea, who knew his job down to the last volt of his motors, and a real sailorman. I knew him and his submarine well, and at a later date was able to go for a cruise in her and to submerge under real war-time conditions so as to visualise the following occurrence accurately. He is dead now, but among his colleagues at that northern base were some who were to win all sorts of decorations, including the Victoria Cross, and are now considerable experts in their profession.

The intention was for the submarine to co-operate with a trawler and so decoy the U-boat, and for this purpose C-24, in command of Lieutenant F. H. Taylor, R.N., had been sent north to Aberdeen, for it was off here that so many fishing trawlers had been sunk this June. On the 23rd June, an hour after midnight, there emerged from Aberdeen the armed trawler *Taranaki*, under the command of Lieut.-Commander Edwards, and C-24 put to sea at the same time, but on the surface. After proceeding to the south-east until 5.45 a.m., Taylor's craft submerged to thirty feet after being taken in tow by the trawler. It was a clear morning with good visibility, a slight swell and a light north-east wind.

That tow line need have excited no suspicion, for it merely suggested that *Taranaki* was trawling; but carefully entwined around this hawser was a telephone cable which led from the trawler to the submarine and enabled the two captains to keep in closest touch. It was 9.30 a.m., when they were fifty miles S.E. by S. of Girdle Ness and the whole horizon was free of any

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shipping, that a German U-boat suddenly rose from the water about three thousand yards away and began to fire her gun, the shell bursting only twenty yards ahead of *Taranaki*. The target had thus been missed; but water is a good carrier of sound, and this shell was heard by C-24 with such unmistakable force as to be taken for an explosive signal made by the trawler. For there had been a prearranged understanding that by this means C-24 should understand that she was to show her periscope and take in a semaphore signal.

Now the whole of this apparently simple yet daring scheme depended primarily on keeping absolutely cool in the moment of extreme interest. Up to this date enemy submarines had been as successful in their attacks as they were elusive, and the method now to be attempted against them was just that of a trap. The apparently unarmed and fishing *Taranaki* was the bait to lure the U-boat towards the invisible C-24. If the trawler were to do anything unusual, or the British submarine to break surface, then not merely would the U-boat make a crash dive and be frightened away, but she would return to Germany with news of the latest ruse. Thus a valuable idea and weeks of careful planning would have been rendered of no avail.

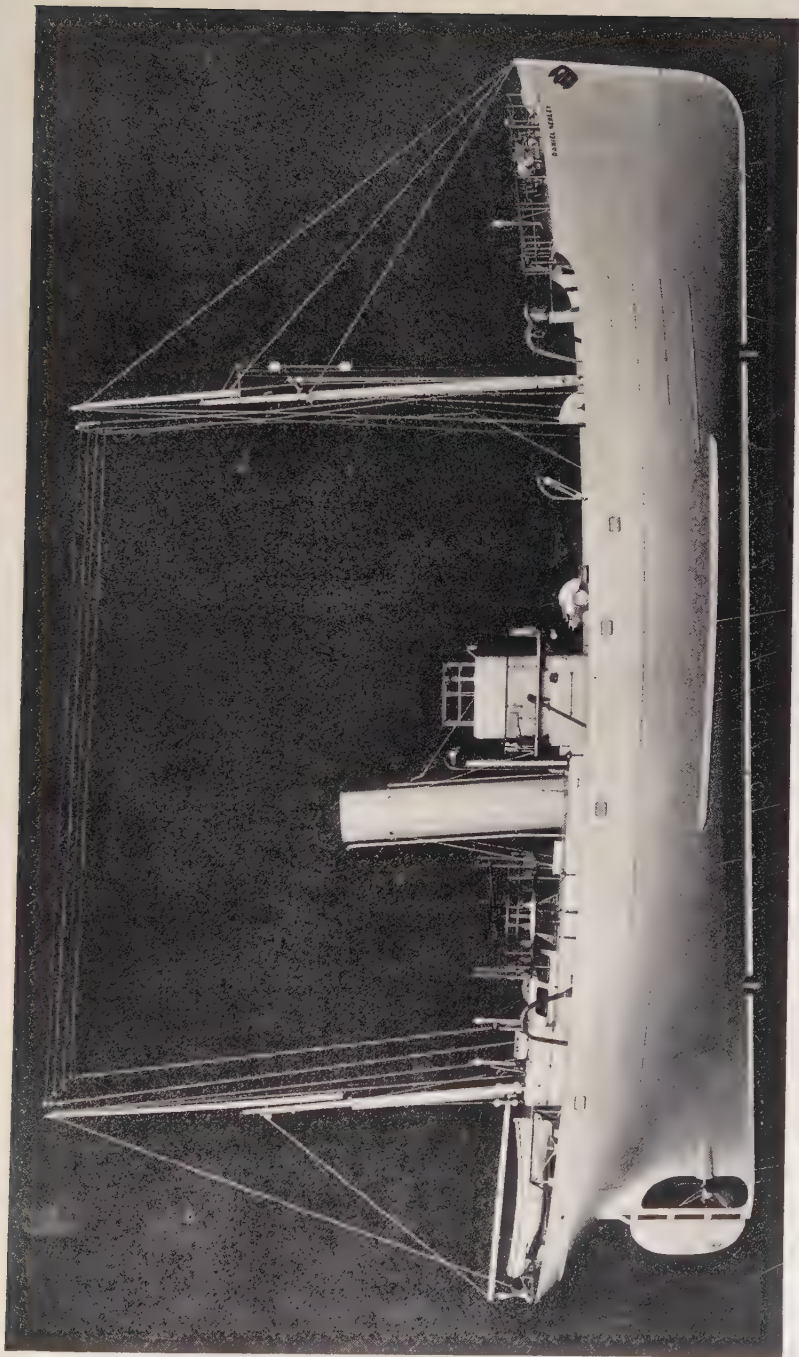
Naturally enough the British submarine on hearing that explosion did not emerge until she had made definitely sure that it was a signal. The *Taranaki's* bridge was first communicated with by telephone, when Edwards informed Taylor that there was an enemy U-boat 1500 yards away on the port bow. This was followed presently by the news, "Submarine 1000 yards astern." The enemy was evidently carefully scrutinising the trawler from forward to aft. Taylor now realised that the big chance had arrived, and instantly gave the order to slip the tow rope. Unfortunately, just at that very critical moment when it

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was most imperative that the enemy should be sunk, this wretched rope got jammed, and in spite of the efforts by three men it could not be released. This annoying news was passed up by telephone to the trawler, and then the telephone suddenly failed.

Edwards had understood, every awkward possibility had been thought out, and he was ready for this emergency. On receipt of Taylor's message, the rope had been slipped from the trawler, who now stopped her engines. The U-boat had also stopped and was on the trawler's starboard beam about 1000 yards off, with a gun ready and the hull trimmed low so that she could dive instantly. She was clearly playing for safety, and a little nervous ; so, to encourage her and allow the necessary elapse of time, Edwards now had *Taranaki's* boat launched in order to simulate panic and abandoning ship. In the meanwhile, Taylor in C-24, with that tiresome tow rope still at the bows, but with his craft submerged, started his electric engines, and putting his helm hard over made to attack the enemy from astern.

But it seemed a forlorn hope, inasmuch as Taylor's craft became extraordinarily unhandy this morning and promptly sank to thirty-eight feet. This was counteracted with some effort, but she was like a wilful, obstinate animal which hitherto had been tame. And then the cause was found in those 100 fathoms of $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch towing wire and some 8-inch coir hawser which were still fast at the bows, in addition to 100 fathoms of telephone cable also making matters worse. When you remember that a submarine has to be steered not merely to starboard or port, but up and down at varying depths, you can appreciate that all these ropes were a double nuisance just at the worst time. But there were two excellent coxswains in this craft, named Ribbons and M'Cadden, who, in spite



PATROL TRAWLER ARMED WITH GUN
Model of the "Daniel Henley."

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of these difficulties, steered and trimmed her so that she never once broke surface or gave herself away.

At first Taylor, using his periscope quickly and seldom, had difficulty in locating the enemy ; but at last he caught sight of her conning-tower and gun, which were all that could be seen, trimmed as the U-boat was. Stealthily closing in till the latter was now only 500 yards away, Taylor manœuvred so as to get in a beam shot, and then at 9.55 a.m. fired a torpedo. All this time Edwards from the trawler was waiting and watching and wondering as the precious moments slid by. If the coup should fail, it would mean death to them all, for the U-boat was better armed and would shell them, or torpedo them, or do both. But just then there was a sharp straight feather of foam across, starting from nowhere, but heading straight for the stopped German. A few more seconds and that feather ended at the U-boat's conning-tower. The torpedo from *Taranaki's* consort had hit the target in the centre ; there was an immediate explosion, and the enemy sank forthwith.

Taylor, of course, saw this through his periscope, and now brought his craft to the surface, went ahead with his engines and did his best to save life. Edwards had simultaneously steamed at full speed towards that spot, and the result was that C-24 picked up the captain of U-40, whilst the trawler had rescued one officer and one petty officer ; nothing else remained on the water save for a lifebuoy and bucket. Taylor transferred the amazed German to the trawler, but on trying to go astern the propeller refused to move. It was extremely fortunate that this manœuvre had not been attempted a little earlier, for it was now discovered that about twenty turns of telephone cable had festooned themselves round the shaft. But eventually *Taranaki* got her in tow again and took her safely back

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to Aberdeen. It had been a most successful and speedy endeavour, for at 11.15 a.m. the return trip was begun, and no time had been wasted. This U-40 was one of the latest German craft, having made a successful cruise against our shipping in the English and Irish Channels. No one begrudged the awards which were made for these ingenious and daring tactics, carried out brilliantly under most difficult circumstances. Edwards was given a D.S.O., Taylor a D.S.C., whilst the two coxswains each received a D.S.M.

Edwards and the captain of U-40 were able on the passage back to have a long and frank discussion as between two submarine experts, and the latter admitted that he had been completely deceived, notwithstanding that he had been scrutinising *Taranaki* all the morning. But not one of those German prisoners ever realised that the trawler had concealed armament of her own, and that the triatic stay between the two masts was an aerial by which Edwards was able to receive from *Vulcan* the latest reports and positions of U-boats. It is worthy of note that U-40 carried as pilot-adviser a German trawler skipper who up till the war had been wont for years to fish out of Aberdeen and other British ports ; and that very forenoon this submarine had sighted three other of our trawlers, which had been carefully avoided as they were observed to be armed.

This splendid co-operation between a trawler and that complicated steel fish we call a submarine was typical of the fraternal spirit which was animating the service of all British seafarers during those months when our country was in danger. About a month later the same methods were attempted again, though this time the submarine was C-27 and the trawler was *Princess Louise*. This was the name she had assumed temporarily, though she was really the *Princess Marie Jose*. She was armed with a couple of small guns,

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which were kept covered over so as not to be noticeable. Her commanding officer was Lieutenant L. Morton, R.N.R., assisted by another officer of the Mercantile Marine, Lieutenant A. M. Tarver, R.N.R., who was in charge of the "panic party"; but there went also on the trip a submarine expert, Lieutenant Colin Cantlie, R.N., as liaison officer between trawler and C-27. Both he and the latter's captain were attached to Captain Haggard's *Vulcan*.

Early in June Lieut.-Commander C. C. Dobson, R.N., one of the most experienced submarine captains in the service, had only just failed in C-27 to sink by torpedo a German U-boat. The latter was too close, and actually passed over Dobson's craft, getting right away. *Taranaki* was the trawler operating with C-27, and feared that the enemy had spotted our submarine, though subsequent events disproved this theory. Now when on 18th July Dobson again took C-27 to sea it was from that northern base Longhope. Having reached her allotted area, she was taken in tow about four of the afternoon, and thus proceeded submerged during the daylight hours, but came to the surface as soon as it became dark.

The 19th of July was characterised by bad weather, and the trawler reported down the telephone that the atmosphere was thick. Dobson therefore ordered the trawler to make towards land and submerged to sixty feet, so as to avoid being run over by the traffic. At eight that night position was fixed as three miles S.S.E. of Fair Island, that lonely spot between the Orkneys and Shetlands and a favourite landfall for German underwater craft during those years. The weather was now improving, so C-27 was again able to rise to the surface under cover of darkness and get ventilation, but at 2 a.m. submerged.

But during that same night the German submarine

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U-23 had been cruising on the surface also. Just before eight on the morning of the twentieth she was still in that trim and heading for Fair Island when she sighted the *Princess Louise* about 5000 yards away on the port beam, so altered course to intercept this apparently unarmed "fisherman" and fired a warning shot at her. Cantlie telephoned down to Dobson, giving him the welcome news five minutes before this, and warning not to slip the tow rope just yet. Shortly afterwards the telephone broke down and no further communication was received from the trawler, but that mattered little now.

The German became annoyed that the trawler did not immediately hoist her colours, so went on shelling. The sound of these shots falling on the water convinced Dobson that it was now time to slip the tow rope, and this was done a few minutes later, C-27 turning to starboard and coming up to periscope depth so as to have a look round. In the meantime, the trawler had drawn aft along the German's side, and the latter altered course to close the "fisherman." In order to stop the enemy's fire—seven shells had already been aimed—*Princess Louise* now hoisted the Red Ensign at the foremast head and then dipped it. The "panic party" in the most realistic manner were hoisting out the boat, rushing about the deck, and pretending to be in great distress, so that the German now ceased fire.

The sea was moderate, there was not much wind, and the trawler's gun-crew were waiting for the word, sitting hidden alongside the starboard gun, which was already loaded. It was on rising so as to use his periscope that Dobson found he was in a very favourable position for attacking the enemy's starboard beam; so, after closing to about five hundred yards, a torpedo was fired. Unfortunately, however, exactly when the torpedo should have struck, U-23 started up her engines, so

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the missile just avoided the latter's stern. When the *Princess Louise* caught sight of her consort's periscope, and two minutes later espied her torpedo, the trawler at once hauled down her Red Ensign, hoisted the White Ensign and cleared away the gun for action. The German captain had just become suspicious that something was happening aboard the trawler and thought he saw the shape of a gun, and that the men who had been so excitedly lowering a boat were no longer thus occupied. He therefore resumed fire, and was turning away to port, but the *Princess Louise's* gun was also in action. At this stage Dobson loosed off his second torpedo, which was most skilfully aimed and struck the German on the starboard side abreast the engine-room, just abaft the conning-tower. Up went a column of water and yellow-black smoke eighty feet into the air, and as soon as this cleared there remained nothing but thirty feet of her hull tilted at a severe angle, but half a minute later she had gone for good.

At the moment of impact there were four German officers and eleven men on her deck, but of these there were saved eight. Immediately Dobson discharged the water from his ballast tanks, rose to the surface and proceeded to rescue the captain, two other officers and four men. The trawler also went off at full speed, picked up with her boat an officer and two others. The sea was covered with oil, but there was practically no wreckage. This enemy craft was a fine vessel 200 feet long, with a radius of 2500 miles and a crew of thirty-four. She had left Borkum three days previously, and was on her way to sink our shipping off the western side of the British Isles. Never had her captain been so surprised in his life as when he saw a torpedo and periscope appear.

The sea being now too rough to transfer the prisoners

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to the trawler, they were treated with every consideration and given food as well as clothing. It was too rough even to be towed, so the British submarine brought them into Longhope, where she arrived at nine that night. This second brilliant success caused considerable joy along the east coast at a time when the U-boat menace was already becoming serious. Everything had worked smoothly, the discipline of the trawler's fishermen crew, unaccustomed as they were to being shelled and remaining inactive till the right moment, had been perfect, and admirable was the coolness displayed. But any mistake or impetuosity would have spoilt the affair and sent U-23 back to Germany with a valuable secret ; it was the excellent team work and co-operation which had won the victory, and to Lieutenant Morton the Admiralty sent their congratulations, whilst Lieut.-Commander Dobson was awarded the D.S.O., Lieutenant Cantlie a D.S.C., but the D.S.M. went to a petty officer in the submarine and to the second hand of the trawler. But such incidents as these were special "stunts" which could only be employed for a limited period. Thus when October came it was decided to drop the idea, though it was reinstituted during the following summer.

During that second autumn of the war the Mediterranean had become a perilous sea to transports and merchantmen generally, for they were armed but defensively with one gun at the stern and no fair match for enemy submarines with their bigger guns and torpedoes and ability to submerge out of sight. But in spite of all these risks the spirit of those mercantile mariners was the same plucky, unselfish quality which has characterised their calling and earned for the sailor a particular regard in the public's affections. In those strenuous times when vessels had to steam through

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the dark hours without lights, and, during the period between dawn and sunset, might be torpedoed without the slightest warning, the shipmaster's life was nothing else but continuous suspense and worry. How often one has had them aboard one's own vessel and heard the story from their own lips before they have landed, whilst still the picture of their sinking ship was fresh at the back of their eyes ! There are few sadder sights than a captain suddenly bereft of his command, after nursing his vessel through unlit fairways, crowded channels, gales, minefields and submarine zones ; there are few more solitary characters in an unkind world.

Well, think of that British s.s. *Woodfield*, which had been taken up by the Government as a transport and left Avonmouth on 26th October 1915. It was just a week later at 7.45 a.m., after she had passed Gibraltar and was steaming eastward, that this 3584-ton vessel, full of mechanical vehicles and thirty-one soldiers, was about forty miles E.S.E. of Ceuta on the coast of Morocco. Up came a German U-boat about five miles away, who, after firing at the steamer, hoisted the signal "Abandon ship immediately." This demand Captain A. K. Jones of the *Woodfield* ignored, but, turning the ship's stern and gun towards the German, went off at full speed. The submarine proceeded to shell the transport determinedly, and a running fight went on, though the merchantman's one weapon was nothing better than a 3-pdr.

Outraged ridiculously, Captain Jones still held on, but after the first half hour a German shell entered the steamer's side and made a hole in the port bunker below the waterline. A second shell burst in the soldiers' quarters, killing four men at once ; a third exploded near the bridge, wounding Captain Jones and fatally injuring the carpenter. When there were eight

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men dead and about a dozen wounded it seemed useless to keep up this uneven contest until there should be no living person left ; so at 8.30 a.m. engines were stopped, boats were lowered and the ship had to be abandoned. Every one had now apparently left except Captain Jones and the gunner, but the latter was seriously wounded and quite dazed. The captain walking through his deserted ship then came across a soldier with a broken arm. " Why are you still on board ? " the former inquired. The soldier replied that his chum was wounded badly and he wasn't going to leave a friend behind. Captain Jones then went along with the soldier, only to find that the chum was now dead.

At fifteen minutes past ten two periscopes were sighted on the starboard beam a mile away, and forthwith Jones beheld a torpedo coming straight for the *Woodfield*. Just in time he told the soldier and the gunner to run forward, and all three reached the fore well as the hull was hit amidships and there rose into the air a narrow mountain of water and coal. When this was over they managed to lower two small rafts into the sea, but one got adrift. The other was too small to hold three men, so Jones placed the two wounded men into it, jumped overboard, swam sixty yards to the other raft, and very shortly they were picked up by the *Woodfield's* mate in one of the ship's boats.

But now the submarine rose to the surface and ordered them alongside. She was a powerful craft with a couple of big guns and a machine-gun mounted in the conning-tower. Jones was sent back to the *Woodfield* in order to fetch the ship's papers, and then the U-boat's commanding officer inquired, " What for you fire the damned gun ? " " Well," answered the British captain, " why have you killed eight men and why did you afterwards fire at the boats ? " The

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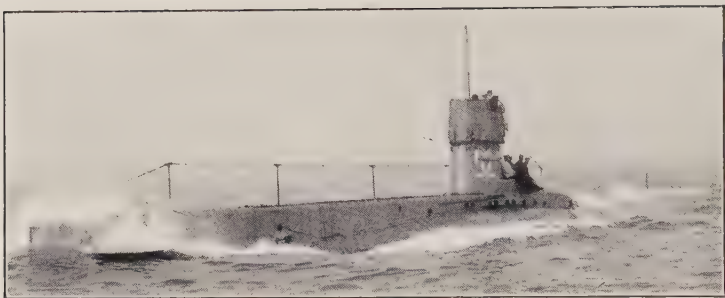
German made the lame excuse that the *Woodfield* was in the sun and he was unable to see. Then, having sunk the *Woodfield* by gunfire, and seeing smoke on the horizon, the German presented him with a bottle of brandy, said he would inform the first ship as to these open boats, and promptly submerged, going off to the north-west.

There were now thirty-four of the crew and twenty-three soldiers without a home, rowing about the Mediterranean; some of them were in great pain. And thus bygone history was to repeat itself, for the only means of preserving existence was to land on that inhospitable Moroccan coast where in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries so many European sailormen had come ashore never to leave it until death released them from Moorish slavery. The fifty-seven survivors were in the *Woodfield's* two gigs and two lifeboats. The twenty-four men from the starboard lifeboat landed at Alhucemas, twenty-one more landed from the two gigs at Penon de la Gomera, but the twelve in the port lifeboat, numbering ten soldiers and two seamen, on coming ashore had the unfortunate luck to fall among Moors near Igraiche and were thus captured. It seems not a little amazing that after four hundred years these tribes should still be a terror to any civilised people reaching this part of North Africa, and it was only after the Spanish Government had negotiated for their release that a month later the dozen Britons were allowed to be conveyed to Melilla along that same coast by a Spanish gunboat. Hither also were interned the rest of the *Woodfield's* survivors, until finally they were all taken across the Mediterranean to Malaga, whence Captain Jones and some of his officers escaped and reached Plymouth in the following February. Such were the tricks which chance played on those who went to sea at that period.

CHAPTER V

NARROW ESCAPES

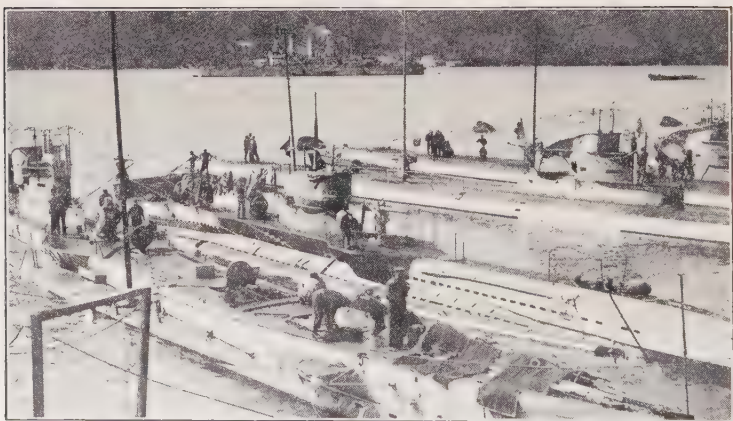
IT is always just a little difficult and delicate to narrate impersonally sights which one witnessed with one's own eyes, and events in which one was privileged to take even the smallest part ; therefore this chapter must be prefaced with an apology if the personal element should seem unduly to creep into the account. But looking back on to these events after ten years, and reading up again one's own salt-stained private journals belonging to that time, one is able both to live anew those actual scenes and yet to set them in their right perspective. And to me there is one conclusion which inevitably offers itself : that no human imagination can ever conceive such marvellous coincidences and strange happenings as the sea in its relation to ships presents to one's gaze. Surprise is characteristic of the ocean's majestic power ; that which to man is the most impossible is with marine nature the least improbable. If I am to present the stories as seen through my own observation, then I must be permitted to bring in a few individual and intimate touches which are essential to the reader's understanding ; but I shall beg he will believe that I have tried, so far as legitimately possible, to keep the subjective in the background. After all, the sea and its drama are eternal : ships and men are but creatures ephemeral. What really matters is to get the true narration ; and personal narrative reviewed after adequate lapse of time is the most accurate kind of history obtainable.



BRITISH C-CLASS SUBMARINE
(See page 74)



GERMAN SUBMARINE
Shelling British Steamer in the Mediterranean.



U-BOATS AT THEIR WAR BASE
(Imperial War Museum photographs. Copyright reserved.)

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We shall go back to the end of December 1915, when a terribly anxious year was to go out with unusual fury of wind and wave. That which is to be recorded now occurred when there was a censorship over the British Press, and has been since crowded out of the big histories in favour of so many hundreds of other incidents which had to be given place. The scene is along the south-west coast of Ireland, where the full force of the Atlantic comes unbroken to dash itself against that island's rocky cliffs. Those of us who were patrolling that area were to experience week after week of gales and heavy seas, but there had been in home waters a curious lull in German submarine activity, for the best U-boats and the most experienced of the enemy's officers were now busy in the Mediterranean sinking vessels bound for the Dardanelles. And then on Tuesday, 28th December, came a sudden, sharp and most mysterious series of happenings. For at 6.30 a.m. the inward-bound oil-tanker *El Zorro*, a fine steamer of just under 6000 tons, was torpedoed by a submarine off the Old Head of Kinsale, and at once bleated on her wireless for help. In response there were at once sent to her the armed patrol yacht *Greta* and a couple of old-fashioned torpedo-boats from Queenstown. Two tugs were also sent out, but owing to the heavy sea could not make headway, for during the previous day it had blown a real winter's gale, which moderated towards morning but came on again later.

By eight that morning, after receiving *El Zorro's* message through the air at Admiralty House, H.M.S. *Adventure*, with the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, on board, slipped from her buoy abreast the yacht club and hurried out to sea in order to chase that U-boat, which was obviously somewhere between the Old Head of Kinsale and the Fastnet. On the

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way down the coast this lithe, beautiful cruiser's wireless took in the news that another oil-tanker, *Vitruvia*, had sighted a submarine at 9.50 a.m. off Galley Head, though, curiously, the enemy had not interfered with her ; but at 12.45 p.m. *Adventure* picked up an S.O.S. wireless message from the Leyland liner *Huronian*, a fine new steamer of nearly 9000 tons, then about eight miles S. by E. of the Fastnet, that lonely rock which is always the last bit of land the Atlantic traveller sights till he reaches the American continent.

The *Adventure*, spick and span in her grey paint, with her admiral's flag flying at the main, now raced on at twenty-two knots, cleaving her clean way through the ocean swell, with smoke pouring out of her four lean funnels, and crews at her guns ready for action : a most picturesque sight of beauty and fighting strength. The *Huronian* had been torpedoed, but soon after one o'clock the cruiser had arrived in the nick of time, frightened the invisible enemy away, searched the vicinity at high speed, and effectually prevented another torpedo from being fired. The *Huronian* was a valuable ship with a cargo of cotton and grain from America, whose loss would have been a serious matter. But, thanks to the excellent organisation and comradeship, she was soon surrounded by those smaller light cruisers, technically known as sloops, and escorted safely into Berehaven with the aid of an armed trawler *Bempton* and her splendid fisherman crew.

Now it so happened that in accordance with routine H.M. Drifter *Daisy VI.*, an armed steam vessel which it was then my proud joy to be commanding, was on that same day at Queenstown for her periodical boiler-cleaning. This had just been concluded, and during her refitting we had managed to obtain a few days of Christmas leave. At 1.10 p.m. I arrived from England and heard the "buzz" that submarines were active

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down the coast. We were lying alongside Rushbrooke dockyard, just above Queenstown, but a quarter of an hour later we had steam enough to get under way ; there was a hurried call at Queenstown for orders and provisions, but at 2.20 p.m. we were heading towards the harbour mouth. The night steamer from Holyhead to Kingstown had been too lively to afford much rest ; in fact, what was officially described as " a very severe gale " was raging in the Irish Sea for twenty-four hours, and during this same night thirty steam drifters on patrol in that sea were badly damaged, forty others being slightly damaged. It presently reached hurricane force, and two fine little vessels, H.M. Drifters *Fern-dale* and *Ladysmith*, were lost with all hands, the former whilst trying to enter Milford Haven and the latter through being driven on to Skokham Island. Similar bad weather was the fate of our patrol forces off the Scottish coast, where armed yachts strained themselves, had their boats smashed in, and a fishing steam trawler in entering Aberdeen was swamped and sunk. You will, therefore, readily accept the statement that it was quite bad weather.

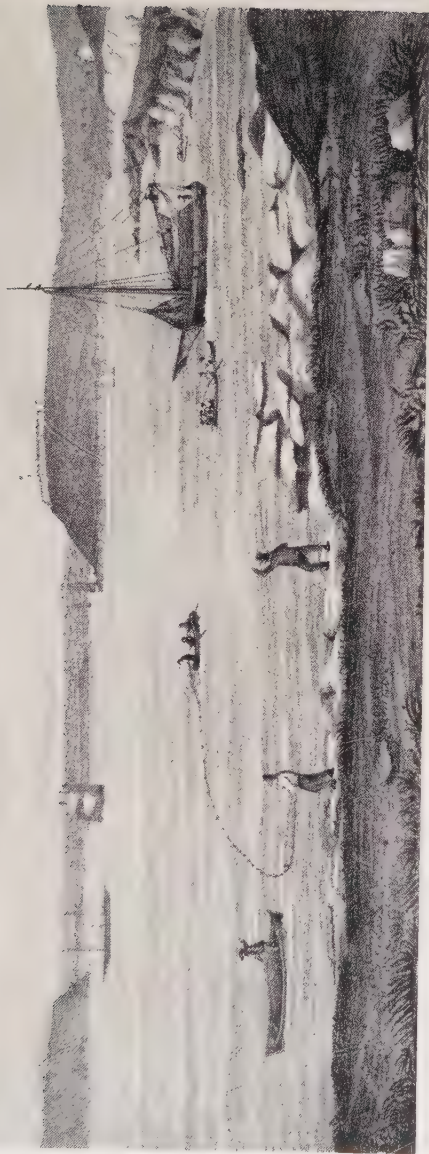
Queenstown's vast harbour was full of most interesting shipping as we went out, and there was lying at anchor in the stream that historic vessel *Scotia*, an auxiliary three-masted barque, which, under Dr Bruce, had been down to the Antarctic in 1902-4 and made such important discoveries. It was well to have seen her when we did. There she was, full up with ammunition, bound for Russia as soon as it was safe for her to emerge ; and she was just the vessel for pushing her way through the ice, having been originally built as the Norwegian whaler *Hekla*. But a few days after we left she had got only as far as the Bristol Channel when she became on fire and a total wreck.

Outside Roche's Point, which guards the Queens-

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town entrance, there was a heavy Atlantic swell, and yet for a brief respite the wind had eased up, though no one could have any doubt as to what was impending. Off Daunt's Rock there was the strange sight of *El Zorro* in a forlorn and helpless condition, with half a dozen trawlers, tugs and the yacht *Greta*, trying to make painful headway. She had 8400 tons of oil which the nation badly needed, but the enemy had shelled her, killing the third engineer ; a torpedo had holed her, then the crew had taken to the boats, and finally came a second torpedo. But even yet she wouldn't sink, so the crew returned aboard after the submarine dived. As we passed her she was getting worse and worse, so that presently she was compelled to anchor off Daunt's Rock lightship, and the trawler *Freesia* managed to take off the crew in spite of the heavy sea, though one man was lost in attempting to jump on to the trawler's deck. The *Freesia's* skipper received the Admiralty's commendation for his skilful seamanship ; but that night the poor *El Zorro* dragged her anchor, came ashore at Man-of-War cove and broke in two, where her rusted, jagged steel plates and beams were a sickly sight for long afterwards.

The *Daisy VI.* was bound for her station at Berehaven, and we had not proceeded far before I realised that our hitherto reliable compass had apparently gone mad. When we headed on a westerly course it indicated S.W. This would have been annoying on the finest June day, but this evening it was doubly trying. Such had been the hurry to reach the patrol area that there had been no time to test it before leaving Queenstown. How angry one felt with those dockyard people ! They had, in recanvassing the top of the bridge-house, taken up the correcting bars of the compass (which is placed overhead in all these fishing craft) and replaced them the opposite way, so as to



ENTRANCE TO QUEENSTOWN HARBOUR
From a Nineteenth Century Print.

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make the deviation utterly hopeless. How could one possibly steer through the night and thick weather off this treacherous coast ?

By eight that night the glass had fallen six-tenths since leaving port. It was now blowing a south-east gale, there was an alarming sea, and the rain was so thick that you could hardly see a ship's length ahead. It was impossible to think of rounding Cape Clear, for the seas off the Fastnet would be terrific ; it would have been madness to have run for a narrow, unlit, rock-girt harbour, and yet I hated to go back. The only alternative and seamanlike proceeding was to put her on a southerly course and stand straight out to sea, and this I did. We were now in the track of the New York-Liverpool shipping ; below us were the remains of the ill-fated *Lusitania*, torpedoed nineteen months previously, and we were right on the scene where to-day those other ships had been attacked. The question in my mind was whether I should or should not display sidelights and masthead light, for if they might be necessary for safe navigation along this busy highway, they would make me a target for the submarines. I therefore compromised by showing only port and starboard lights, *but* reversed ; that is to say, showing astern and not ahead. This would certainly mess up the aim of any torpedo, as we should be going away instead of apparently approaching, and it was just possible that our lights might be seen by any steamer before collision. Moreover, we were pretending to be a sailing ship, and the reefed winter mizzen was set.

In this manner we kept standing off and on all night, with atrocious seas and a fury of a wind. I had to rely on a sixpenny pocket compass, which I always carried in case we should ever have to take to the boat ; but occasionally through the mist we were able to catch a glimpse of Galley Head lighthouse. Eased

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down to five knots, the *Daisy* was doing little more than holding her own with steerage way on her, and the seas would occasionally come leaping on to the deck with a wallop ; but she behaved splendidly and pluckily in all those trying hours. The *Adventure* was steaming back that same night to Queenstown, and I quote two remarks by her captain. At midnight it was an "easterly gale with heavy sea and thick rain." Five hours later the *Adventure* had to reduce speed to eight knots, when it was a "heavy E.S.E. gale, high short sea, rain." The captain of the *Huronian* afterwards told me he had logged it as a "fresh gale." During the night the glass fell another three-tenths, making a total of nine-tenths since 2 p.m. !

However, the long night ended without incident, except that the rats which had joined us whilst lying alongside Rushbrooke quay, and the noise of clattering gear such as oil-drums and other heavy articles, made it difficult to snatch an hour's sleep. But by ten in the morning, as the weather was still fierce and the atmosphere thick, and the crew worn out, I deemed it advisable to run into Castlehaven rather than grope past unseen rocks and islands with an unreliable compass. Leaving here the next morning at daylight, the uncertain weather had sent the glass up five-tenths, but by the time we had steamed round into Berehaven it had fallen four-tenths again and was now blowing another S.W. gale. The next day it was even worse, so that the liberty men ashore from their ships in Berehaven were unable to get back on board. For most of Saturday (New Year's day) it blew at times with hurricane force, so that no patrol vessels, big or small, were able to move out of harbour ; and then came Sunday, when it eased up in the afternoon, which was lucky.

For a remarkable occurrence had taken place. During this gale, which was the worst that had come

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to the Irish coast for forty years, the four-masted barquentine *Renfield*,* of Port-Glasgow, went so near to destruction that her chance was not worth a farthing. She was bound from Capetown to Glasgow with a cargo of maize, and got caught badly, being now off the south-west coast of Ireland. Her sails were mostly carried away ; one sea came aboard amidships, carrying off half of one lifeboat, and, sweeping right aft, demolished the compass over the side. Her captain was a first-class sailorman with an extra-master's ticket. Norwegian by birth, he had been brought up as a British subject in Australia, and he told me that running before that sea he towed ninety fathoms of warp astern, which some of us have found one of the best things to do in like circumstances, and he kept pouring oil down the " heads " forward. Both of these efforts were found to be very effective ; but none the less the ship was almost lost.

She was a fine bold, able vessel, and being compelled to uphelm and run into one of these long Irish fjords she all but got on the Bull, Cow and Calf Rocks by Dursey Head, where on the smoothest of days there is always an ugly sea. Then, having but a small-scale chart, and, as the captain remarked, not knowing where he was nor which of these fjords he had entered, he sped tearing under bare poles up Bantry Bay, which is about thirty miles long ; and just before reaching the top end, where the road comes down to the sea, he let go anchor, dragged, but brought up so close to the shore that when he swung round his stern was almost aground. It was obvious that a shift of wind, or another hard blow, would turn the *Renfield* into a wreck, but in any case she could never emerge from her cul-de-sac without assistance. So, as soon as the

* *Renfield*, 1112 gross tons. Built of steel by Russell & Co., Port-Glasgow, in the year 1895. She measured 209 feet long.

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weather began to ease off, about 1 p.m. that Sunday we were sent with a trawler to tow her out of a romantic small estuary. By the time we had got alongside, the short winter's daylight was beginning to fail, but I never realised before that it could take a couple of hours to heave up a sailing ship's anchor. It was a mixed crew of various nationalities, including Belgians and Swedes, though there were no alien enemies aboard. Round and round the men walked with their capstan bars, singing the old sea shanties for one of the last times they will ever be sung afloat, but the different foreign accents made a curious rough effect. At last the anchor was sighted, the strain came on the two ropes, darkness had fallen, the wind had died down with sunset, and we took her to a safe place where she would get a nice lee under a green island. Here she remained for some time until she had a partial refit and new sails and towed away, for she had lost £500 worth of canvas. It was fortunate for the underwriters that she was extricated, for hull and cargo were valued at £36,000, and before the next day was over there was another S.W. gale, making her original anchorage a dead lee shore with only a few feet to drag.

Those were days full of much that could only be fascinating to any one attracted by ships and sailors. There were wonderful yarns, too, from all kinds of the great sea brotherhood. I remember being Captain A. H. Highton's guest aboard the *Huronian* and hearing the whole thrilling story of his narrow escape from that submarine. The liner's fore part was shattered, but it was good to hear this fine seaman express his admiration for the way *Adventure* had saved his ship from certain destruction. This was Captain Highton's last voyage, after fifty-one years at sea, and he had been one of those commanding officers who were in the big convoy which early in the war brought troops from

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India to Marseilles. Forty-two steamers all anchoring together ! Who will ever live to witness such a sight ?

It was not wonderful that ships making the Irish coast from the Atlantic were lost by submarines, considering that the patrols were unable to be everywhere at the same time. Some of the torpedoed ships made a splendid fight to keep afloat and only just failed. Others were assisted to come limping into Berehaven and barely succeeded. Early in March 1916 another oil-tanker, the s.s. *Teutonian*, was attacked twenty or thirty miles off the Fastnet at ten in the morning, but she did her best not to sink, and she never foundered until seven hours later, the whole crew being rescued by one of the sloops which did more to protect our Mercantile Marine off that coast than will ever be known to the public ; but many a ship-master will remember gratefully to the end of his days the feeling of security when these craft met him out in the Atlantic and escorted, zig-zagging, ahead through the submarine zone. Few things have happened to bring the Royal Navy and the Mercantile Marine more closely together in fraternal association, and when the convoy system was inaugurated generally, these sloop captains were among the most hardly worked men who ever went to sea. As an instance I would like to put the following extract of thirty-six hours' activity as performed by one of these officers with whom I was particularly acquainted.

At ten o'clock one Sunday night H.M. sloop *X*—— was escorting a steamer when she received a wireless S.O.S. signal from another steamship reporting herself torpedoed some miles off. The sloop therefore left her first steamer and proceeded at full speed to the position indicated, arriving there at 2 a.m. and cruising in the vicinity for a couple of hours, showing a light at intervals. Nothing was sighted until dawn at 4.15 a.m., when the torpedoed steamer's boats were observed

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and picked up. The survivors explained that they had seen the sloop's light from the first, but had refrained from answering, fearing lest it might be the U-boat anxious to locate the boats and take the master prisoner—a favourite trick at a certain date.

The sloop had no sooner sighted these boats than she received an S.O.S. from the s.s. *K*——, stating she was steering a certain course whilst being chased by a submarine. The sloop proceeded to her direction, and after nearly three hours' steaming escorted her for a couple of hours out of the danger zone, as it was thought ; for now yet another vessel, the s.s. *C*——, was being shelled by another submarine, so the sloop had to go and assist her. This was done, but in the meantime the *K*—— had been torpedoed when the sloop was but four and a half miles away. Presently a transport was escorted, and then a large liner, followed by a third steamer, which was safely passed through the danger area. As an interlude, the sloop sighted a submarine 11,000 yards away and shelled her until the latter was compelled to dive. Later on another steamer was sighted which had been badly damaged by submarine. To her aid steamed the sloop, and stood by until the wounded ship turned turtle and sank. All in thirty-six hours !

But one of the most extraordinary escapes through which a sailing vessel ever passed was that connected with the *Terpsichore*. This was a ship-rigged iron vessel which had been built in England as far back as the year 1883. At the commencement of war in August 1914 she was German owned and happened to be at Limerick ; she was therefore taken over and became British property, and was chartered by a firm in Liverpool, who managed her for the Government. She was a handsome and picturesque craft of 2025 tons, and after crossing the Atlantic sailed from Halifax



BULL AND COW ROCKS
Off S.W. of Ireland. From a print.
(See page 98)

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on the 15th April 1916 with a very valuable cargo of timber. She was uninsured, for the rates on sailing ships in those war days were very high, and the risk of being torpedoed when making the Irish coast was considerable, seeing that a sailing vessel possessed neither speed nor any means of avoiding a submarine. All that could be hoped for was that on sighting the land it might be with a fresh breeze and sufficient sea to impede the enemy's activities.

Now exactly one month to the day after leaving Halifax she was sailing along with a fresh W.N.W. wind bound for Liverpool, but the weather was foggy, as it often is during the month of May. That particular morning I remember it was especially thick, and I happened to be only a short distance away when she passed Mizzen Head. According to my own journal the visibility in that neighbourhood was not more than about 300 yards. Now the *Terpsichore* believed that she was well to the southward of the Fastnet and heading along the south Irish coast. Suddenly she heard the explosive fog signal from Mizzen Head lighthouse, which she took for the Old Head of Kinsale, and held on her course with confidence to pass Queens-town. But after sailing a very few miles her captain was amazed to sight low-lying land just ahead. He tried unsuccessfully to wear her, saw a narrow opening through some rocks and then made for it. Through this small entrance she was sailing with everything aloft, doing about seven knots, when after a few yards she brought up all standing, having struck a sandy bottom.

This was right up Roaringwater Bay, another of those wide south-west Irish fjords, and the course up here would be about the same as that along the south coast. In order to get the picture clear in one's mind it is necessary to think of a group of uninhabited islets and sharp reefs, known as the Carthy Islands.

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On the western side is the biggest of the group, which is Carthy Island proper, thence stretches a reef towards Brininy Island at the north-east, then more reefs and pinnacles to North Carthy Island, and so round to South Carthy, which almost joins on to what might be called South-west Carthy Island. Between the latter and Carthy Island proper there is a passage through jagged rocks, this channel being not more than eighty feet wide, and the depth at low-water springs varying from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 fathoms. But once past this narrow opening the reefs contain a most interesting lagoon, such as one hardly expects to find in these latitudes. The first time I saw it, it brought to my mind those wonderful pictures and stories of the Southern Seas. There is not much more than a ship's length inside and the water soon shoals ; a few yards too far on either hand are nasty, sharp rocks ready to puncture the bottom of any vessel.

*Terpsichore's** adventure must be unique ; every officer and man who saw her marvelled that it had been possible for a ship of such size, carrying all sail, to get herself through that eighty-foot funnel and all those rocks without being smashed to pieces. Had it not been for a lucky sandy shoal patch at the exactly required spot to bring her up, she would have gone through five-fathom water straight on to a very shallow reef and broken her back. No human force could have saved her. She was drawing at the time twenty-two feet forward ; the tide here rises ten feet at springs, and this was the early afternoon of 14th May, three days before springs.

It was some time before the fog lifted and information reached the coastguard at Schull at the top of

* *Terpsichore* measured 269 feet long and 41.5 feet in beam (that is to say, just half the width of the passage between the rocks), and she was 24.3 feet deep.



THE CARTHY ISLANDS.

This reproduction from part of the Admiralty chart (by permission of H.M. Stationery Office) shows the position where *Terpsichore* grounded. Soundings in fathoms. Entrance was made from S.W.

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Roaringwater Bay. In this manner the news was sent to the Commander-in-Chief at Queenstown, and so to his patrol vessels, with the result that by the next day there began to arrive a mixed assembly consisting of H.M. sloop *Sunflower* (Lieut.-Commander A. G. Leslie, R.N.), H.M. Armed Yacht *Pioneer* (Lieut.-Commander W. Olphert, R.N.R.), H.M. Drifter *Daisy VI.*, and the Admiralty dockyard tug *Stormcock* from Queenstown. The problem on 16th May was how to get *Terpsichore* out before the swell got worse and the present fine weather failed, or she would most certainly become a total wreck. And in any case there was still the danger of attack by submarines, which were known to be operating off this coast.

There was something delightfully pleasing to note every kind of seafaring officer and man represented in this endeavour to help by their steamships the old-time sailing ship. Here we were pukka Navy, Mercantile Marine, North Sea fishermen, yachtsmen with a difficult but most fascinating job before us, trying to save a ship and cargo worth the sum of £34,798. It is certain that no ship in the world's history ever sailed into a more awkward place if she was to be got out whole. The chief credit for what followed belongs to Lieut.-Commander Olphert, who possessed many years' experience in liners to New Zealand, and his practical knowledge of the tricks that can be done with wire hawsers and bollards was invaluable. He was the first to arrive on the scene and to get wires laid out from both *Terpsichore's* quarters and from her port bow. These wires were secured to the rocks, and if you had seen the bluejackets' faces you would have seen that this interlude from monotonous patrolling, slipping up and down those sea-worn reefs, was like a real holiday. When an anchor had been laid to the south-east from her starboard bow, the sailing ship was

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just about as well secured as was possible. The swell was coming through the narrow funnel between the islands, and it needed only a little more to snap those wires as the ship surged about, and then she would be finished. But for the present she was neither holed nor leaking, and actually lying upright on her bottom.

It was towards high water on the afternoon of Tuesday, 16th May, that the scheme which Lieut.-Commander Leslie had worked out with meticulous detail was put into operation. The plan was to tow her out stern first, but the risk was that she might take a sheer and hit the rocks. The tow rope was made fast at the bows, but secured by a series of stoppings along the port side till it came aft to the stern, where it was additionally secured. Whilst in the offing *Sunflower* and *Pioneer*, two armed trawlers, and three drifters were keeping guard, *Daisy* had just room to squeeze in through the opening round the *Terpsichore's* stern, and by a little manœuvring to swing round with her bow to the sailing ship's bow. A heavy thick rope hawser was then passed, and we were ready to begin, the tug *Stormcock* being a long way astern, just outside the entrance to the lagoon with the *Terpsichore's* tow rope.

At 2.50 p.m. the sailing ship was now well afloat with the rising tide, hawsers on the rocks were slipped, the *Stormcock* went slow ahead, the *Daisy* kept a steady strain at the bows so as to prevent the ship from slewing round, and after an anxious twenty-five minutes the *Terpsichore* was brought safely through the rocks, the stoppings to the stern rope were quickly cut, the *Stormcock* was able to take the sailing ship by the bow and anchor her in deep water well away from any dangers. The whole attempt has been carried out with not the slightest hitch, thanks to excellent staff work. We had been lucky, indeed ; for soon afterwards a thick fog settled down and there were orders to

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stand by the *Terpsichore* all night. But a wireless had come from the Commander-in-Chief containing two words—"Well done"—and there was nothing wanting now to complete our joy, though a letter presently reached Whitehall informing their Lordships of the "excellent seamanship" that had been displayed.

By 6.30 a.m. next morning the *Terpsichore* had her anchor off the ground, the *Stormcock* began to tow her away, and I was glad to find that none the worse for her adventure the former reached the Mersey, arriving at Runcorn on 24th May. With her double topsails, single t'gallants and no royals she made a great contrast to the rest of the shipping one usually saw off that coast. Her skipper was Welsh, and there was a curious mixed crew of Greeks, Spaniards and others. I fancy that the young apprentice at the wheel was British, but there was a yarn going about that one of the Greeks had bitten the face of another, simply because he was accused of resembling Charley Chaplin! Now that there are scarcely any of these vessels afloat, I wonder sometimes what has happened to her. By all the regulations we were entitled to heavy salvage; but there was a good deal of legal argument, and at first it was decided that since the *Terpsichore* had been an enemy ship and was now the property of the Government, this could not be granted. This decision the Admiralty afterwards modified so that officers and men should be allowed to claim against so much of the cargo as belonged to the owners. Finally, when many more months had elapsed, and we had almost forgotten about the incident, the sum of £2000 was awarded between the four ships mentioned.

But this small amount on a totally uninsured vessel was out of all proportion to the immensely interesting afternoon on which every one must look back when he thinks of that May incident.

PART III

THE BROTHERHOOD OF BATTLE

CHAPTER VI

DESTROYER OR DEATH

I SUPPOSE there are few of us whose pulse does not quicken at the sight or mention of a torpedo-boat destroyer. No one who has been to sea in either flotilla-leaders or destroyers fails to realise that this is not merely a specialist's job, but essentially demands a particular species of young man. He is the nearest approximation to the cavalry officer you will ever find afloat ; that is why keen riders to hounds make such excellent destroyer captains. Courage, quick ability to take in a situation, coolness, that priceless faculty to decide instantly yet not hastily, and—above all—true seamanlike sense, can be regarded as the basic essentials for any who aspire to be elected into this most exclusive brotherhood : for a brotherhood it certainly is, requiring both a special training and a particular vocation.

There are two kinds of naval officers : the " big " ship man and the " little " ship man ; but never the twain shall agree. The former with his hundreds of men, his enormous vessel and huge guns, is happy living aboard a floating town. The captain dwells in spacious dignity ; the ward room is really a well-frequented service club. But for the officer who cares more for actual seafaring than for gunnery or being merely one of a crowd, and is enthused with real ship love, it is the destroyer which attracts. Those in the battle fleet may think of the destroyer people as not very far removed from pirates ; but there were plenty of Elizabethan officers who belonged to this category.

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Certain highly-placed individuals have regarded destroyer flotillas as a carefully ringed clique requiring to be broken up ; other persons of not less eminence still remember them as that screen which preserved the movements of the Grand Fleet from the insidious attacks of the enemy.

But if you will read the following pages there can be no hesitation in being deeply thankful that there are officers so keen to go afloat in comparatively small and unarmoured ships, and so reliant on their own confidence that they willingly consent to live cheek-by-jowl in cramped quarters so as to be in command of a creature more responsive than the fastest thoroughbred horse, more speedy than all the other ships that steam across the seas. During the Great War these destroyers, both individually as private vessels and collectively as divisions or flotillas, performed the most trying and gallant service. But their splendid work has never yet received its full appreciation, for the reason that these great achievements have been swallowed up by the importance of major operations ; strategy by some writers has been regarded as more interesting than brilliant tactics, and the work of the battle fleet has demanded so much attention as to leave little space for destroyer records. But these "light horsemen," with their dash and rush into the very entrance of death, made during those four years, 1914-1918, some of the most glorious episodes in all our naval history. No artist could ever adequately depict the sight of a 33-knot destroyer rushing at full speed, bows up, stern down, oil smoke issuing from funnels, the white ensign flying stiff as a board at the mast-head, a great white semi-circular wave rising on either side of the hull as the razor-like stem goes cutting through the sea, officers and men at their stations, guns and torpedo tubes awaiting only the critical minute,

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and a mighty roar of wind swishing from forward to aft by that own-made hurricane. The senses can take in some of these, but not all, at one time ; and even then there still remain that restrained excitement, suspense, the thrill of motion, the eagerness to attack—which the painter's art can never set down and the photograph utterly fails to catch. It is this destroyer fraternity with their hunting tactics and vivacity who come more near to the sporting side of naval warfare than you can find anywhere else.

Their losses were not numerically considerable when you consider how many of these craft there were and the risks they ran. Only sixty-seven of our destroyers and flotilla-leaders (which are, of course, really big destroyers) were lost throughout the whole four years of hostilities, and only eleven of that now obsolete class called torpedo-boats. Most disasters occurred through striking mines, and seven were sunk during the Battle of Jutland. But when you think of those long days and nights of thick weather and unlit ship and coasts, it is remarkable that only eight destroyers were wrecked and thirteen lost by collision. On the other hand, these destroyers were able to save hundreds of lives, Commodore Keyes, for example, in the destroyer *Fire-drake*, rescuing about two hundred survivors from the German cruiser *Mainz* at the Battle of the Bight in August 1914. It was on this occasion that the British destroyer *Defender*, belonging to the 1st Flotilla, after having stopped to pick up some of the enemy already had got the survivors into the boats, when a German cruiser opened fire on her, compelled her to give up this work of charity, and retreat. Those of us who saw the Harwich destroyers some little time after this battle, where they hunted and attacked brilliantly, learnt from actual participants the fine work of these crack craft.

It is a tribute to efficient organisation that of every

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twenty destroyers you would always find sixteen at any selected moment in full running order, in spite of the requisite docking, repairing and regular boiler cleaning. Patrolling, escorting and numerous other duties, such as examination of shipping, often in bitter cold, heavy seas or fog, filled up the weeks when no big North Sea battle seemed imminent. The destroyer *Tigress* whilst steaming was struck by such a sea as to damage her bridge and break two of the captain's ribs. One of the most interesting things I ever remember was on 10th March 1915, when the destroyer *Ariel*, who had been out hunting with some of her sisters and had rammed the German submarine U-12, came back up the Firth of Forth into dock through lines of cheering seamen, but considerably damaged at the bows by the impact of steel forefoot against steel hull. There were fine acts of seamanship, too, as at the end of October 1915, when destroyers were sent out from the Forth to stand by the ill-fated *Argyll*, which had got ashore on the rocks and was likely to break up. The supreme test comes when it is necessary to take such tender craft alongside in a nasty sea; one mistake, and you ruin both your ship and your own career.

It was because a destroyer captain got to know his vessel as a rider knows his horse that, in spite of the heavy swell which continuously almost hurled the destroyers on the *Argyll's* deck, the cruiser's men were taken off by the hundred without loss of life. For the fact is that a destroyer, in spite of all her virtues of speed and aggressiveness, is yet unable to endure hard knocks. You remember that incident of the German raid in the North Sea, when on Wednesday, 16th December 1914, Scarborough was shelled. Some of our destroyers came into action with the enemy, and one of them had an extremely narrow escape about five o'clock that cold winter's morning. I went aboard her as soon as she

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returned limping into port, and she was a melancholy sight. She was of over 900 tons with a speed of 32 knots, armed with three 4-inch guns and four 21-inch torpedo tubes, and a few hours previously had looked so smart and warlike. But now there was an ugly gaping hole where a shell had hit her on the waterline and had gone clean through, tearing steel plates like paper. Her funnels were riddled and punctured, the escape pipe was cut through, whilst on the port side the motor dinghy had been smashed. The bridge was badly knocked about, wireless topmast and gear carried away, but the marvellous thing was that a shell had penetrated the wireless room and come out again without killing the operator, though he did "growse" because his clothes had got a bit burnt during the action. Seeing that this room was little bigger than a kennel for a good-sized St Bernard dog, it was amazing that the man was not blown to little bits.

Another shell had jammed the steering gear, so that the destroyer was out of control and went running round through the darkness in circles. The effort was made to steer her by means of her engines, only then it was noticed that the engine-room telegraph had been shot away ; but the after-steering gear was connected up and the ship was able to carry on. Her wireless aerial no longer existing, she could neither transmit nor receive messages, and it was feared for some time that she was lost.

In the small hours of the morning she came into harbour with one man killed, another dying and twenty more wounded. Those who had survived were utterly done up, and every one's nerves on edge, but the crew were now sent home for a week's leave. The meeting with the enemy had been during a very dark night with no moon and a flat calm sea. And then, as one of the officers told me at the time, suddenly the loom of vague ships

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steaming with lights out suggested the impression that they were not British. The recognition-lights signal was made but not answered, and that settled the matter. It was now time to fire, searchlights were switched on, torpedoes and guns got into action, and so it went on. The man killed was at the gun on the fo'c'sle, and yet the gun itself was uninjured. The wounded most pluckily kept at their duties, including captain and sub-lieutenant. Both anchors had been shot away, the studded cables had been snapped, the bollard on the fo'c'sle blown over the side, leaving but a hole in the deck. The chart room was sheer chaos with broken glass, books, sailing directions making a crazy carpet ; and a fire had broken out in her owing to the rockets becoming ignited. One man was wounded whilst at the speaking tube, both steel bridge-ladders had been so shattered that they were scarcely serviceable, everywhere shell splinters were scattered : in short this beautiful ship was a mass of twisted ugly metal.

And yet she had managed to steam in at 26 knots in spite of that damage to the bows, since the fore bulk-head had been shored up. As to the personal side, the temporary surgeon had been a martyr to seasickness, but he was kept so busy with all his wounded men that he had no time to attend to his own troubles. What does it feel like to be in a night attack against enemy cruisers ? " You're too busy looking after your own job to think of anything else," answered her second-in-command. " The worst is at the beginning—when the enemy turns on the searchlight suddenly. Every one feels that it is meant for him as a special target."

But it was at Jutland that the destroyer flotillas received their severest test and proved to the world the keen top-notch efficiency of these light-horse sportsmen. As fast as they could be built, the Admiralty had added

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to the fleet an enormous multitude of those lovely new destroyers whose names began with the letters M, N, O and P. At the beginning of the year 1915 I had been privileged to be a guest in one of the very first of this class, fresh from the builders and now on passage down the North Sea. The newest unit of this exceptional class to be observed was the *Onslow*, which on her maiden voyage had come round from the Clyde to the west of Ireland on the eve of the Irish Easter rebellion, just six weeks before the Battle of Jutland. Measuring 270 feet long she made an impressive grey sight against the black rocks and green of the Irish coast, but the time was nearly at hand when she would prove that she was something more than beautiful.

The reader will remember the circumstances that led up to contact being formed between the British and German fleets. On 30th May 1916 the Admiralty received intelligence which indicated impending operations by the German Fleet. Both Admiral Jellicoe, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, and Vice-Admiral Beatty, Commanding the Battle-cruiser Fleet, were that afternoon accordingly informed. At 7 p.m. Admiral Jellicoe, at Scapa Flow, made a signal to his cruisers and destroyers to raise steam for 20 knots. At 8.23 p.m. Admiral Beatty up the Firth of Forth signalled his light cruisers and destroyers to have steam for 22 knots at half an hour's notice, and for 15 knots now. Both fleets began leaving their respective bases at 9.30 p.m., 30th May 1916. Admiral Jellicoe's fleet was screened by three flotillas of destroyers, Admiral Beatty's by three flotillas also. After proceeding down the North Sea, Beatty's battle-cruisers opened fire on the enemy the following afternoon at 3.48, the range being the equivalent of $10\frac{1}{2}$ land miles. Ten minutes before this Beatty had ordered his destroyers to take position ahead of the flagship *Lion*,

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and at 3.56, since the opportunity appeared favourable for a torpedo attack, he ordered his destroyers to "proceed at your utmost speed."

These comprised the twelve : *Nestor*, *Nomad*, *Nicator*, *Narborough*, *Pelican*, *Petard*, *Obdurate*, *Nerissa*, *Moor-som*, *Morris*, *Turbulent* and *Termagant*, and it may be at once said that the attack was carried out in the most gallant manner. They started off ahead of *Lion*, and then turned sharply to port towards the German Fleet, who were now about four or five miles away. The object was to get on the enemy's bow and thus fire torpedoes at close range with the hope of disabling the leading battle-cruisers. I had been a guest aboard this very *Lion*, about four years previously, when this identical kind of attack had been made against her in practice by our own craft ; and I have since the war witnessed the same manœuvre from the bridge of the senior of nine destroyers all steaming at high speed—one of the most thrilling experiences, when every one is keyed up and there is no thought but for the job in hand.

These twelve destroyers, which Beatty had despatched, proceeded in three divisions, and at the "utmost speed," so as to make as short as possible the period during which they would be under fire of the enemy. Five miles at say thirty knots would mean only ten minutes, yet the most tense moments in any man's life. Naturally the enemy also sent forth his destroyers to thwart this plan, so that the rivals met each other in a kind of "No Man's Sea" and engaged in an action of their own with gunfire. It was, however, of brief and transient duration, our destroyers being able to rush on and fire their torpedoes at the battle-cruisers as intended. But the German Battle Fleet coming up from the south now appeared and sank *Nestor* and *Nomad*, though these two destroyers, to-



H.M.S. "FIRE Drake"

From a model of the destroyer.

(See page 107)

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gether with *Nicator* and *Moorsom*, had been able to close right in to this German Battle Fleet and fire the remaining torpedoes. This, indeed, is one of the most outstanding incidents of Jutland, and one of the most thrilling in all the naval operations of the war. Even after *Nestor* and *Nomad* had been sunk, *Nicator* and *Moorsom* managed to extricate themselves by great daring and cleverness in seamanship ; for, notwithstanding a perfect tornado of German shells, the *Nicator's* cool captain stood against the front of his bridge smoking his pipe and giving the coxswain orders so as to avoid the enemy's salvoes. Thus, when one salvo fell short, the *Nicator* would alter course towards it, and by this means the next German salvo would go over. By thus zigzagging scientifically, and making a thick cloud of smoke from their funnels as a screen, they skilfully emerged safely from as hot a situation as naval battle can produce.

We are now in a position to fill in this outline with greater detail and to appreciate some of the poignant moments which this brotherhood of destroyers lived through in their hunting. And first of all let us watch *Nestor's* gallantry. Her skipper was Commander the Hon. E. B. S. Bingham, who had already been present at the Battle of the Bight and the Battle of the Falklands. A keen horseman, who availed himself of any leave from his duties to go hunting if the season coincided, he has put on record in his interesting account the statement that on reaching England after the Falklands he was on his way to hunt with the Heythrop when he casually read in a paper his appointment to destroyer command : so the change over was not sudden.

When at Jutland Beatty hoisted that signal to all destroyers, Bingham, in turn, hoisted the signal for his own destroyers to form single-line astern of *Nestor*, and he says that they steamed at thirty-five knots for

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half an hour. There were fifteen of the enemy's destroyers, which received them at 4.40 p.m., the range being 10,000 yards, though Bingham manœuvred to close this distance. Five minutes later the *Nomad*, his next astern, was hit in the boiler-room and disabled. *Nestor* had very quickly got the range and fired several salvoes from her 4-inch guns, which helped to cause two German destroyers to sink below the sea. At 4.40 the rest of the enemy destroyers "turned tail and fled," but were pursued. The result was that *Nestor* and *Nicator* found themselves rapidly approaching the head of the German battle-cruiser line, who sent in an unpleasant but extremely warm fire. *Nestor*, having fired three torpedoes, turned away at 4.58 in order to get clear and rejoin Beatty's force. But suddenly, about two minutes later, a huge cloud of steam rose from *Nestor's* hull, entirely enveloping her as if with a funeral shroud : the next phenomenon was that her tremendous speed was gradually fading away to nothing, for an enemy light cruiser had opened a hot fire, promptly rained shells on to *Nestor*, putting boilers out of action, and the *Nestor* came to a full stop a little to the west of where *Nomad* lay disabled.

The *Petard* returning from the chase gallantly offered to take *Nestor* in tow ; but even more gallantly the latter refused, since it would have meant the loss of both craft instead of one. That is the true spirit of sea brotherhood. But if *Nestor* was now immobile, she still had her guns, so when a German destroyer swept down to bestow the death-blow, *Nestor* received her with such volleys that the enemy had to steam off rapidly. The next visit, however, was in considerable and irresistible force : it was the main body of the High Seas Fleet, who just deposited one heavy curtain of smothering shells, columns of spray and smoke,

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leaving *Nestor* but a sinking wreck and a human slaughterhouse ; yet even now perfect discipline continued. Bingham and his officers were busy with their men, destroying confidential documents, providing biscuit and water for the boats, lowering the latter and the Carley floats (oval-shaped rafts), and, after a trying lull, the enemy again concentrated with their secondary armament, sending another shell deluge ; but *Nestor* now fired at them her last torpedo.

The plucky sporting destroyer was sinking rapidly, the order was given to abandon ship, boats and floats were filled with men, and then Lieutenant M. J. Bethell, the First Lieutenant, stood alongside his captain as the latter asked, "Now, where shall *we* go?" Bethell looked at Bingham, and had just answered, "To Heaven, I trust, sir," when his eyes were attracted by the sight of a dying signalman, to whom he now went. But suddenly another shell burst over First Lieutenant and signalman: they were never seen again. Bingham and others went off at the final moment in the whaler, but she had been so holed that she sank almost immediately, and they swam off to the destroyer's motor-boat, whence they watched the *Nestor*, still shelled, sink into the North Sea. As she disappeared, her survivors, having fought to the very last, saluted her with three rousing British cheers followed by the chanting of "God Save the King," and then by that indomitable expression of optimism when the bluejackets began, "Are we down-hearted?" "No!" "It's a long way to Tipperary . . ." And so in spite of being in a leaky, overcrowded, broken-down motor-boat many miles from land, a cheery song broke over that cheerless situation. Brotherhood of the sea? It was that in all its splendour.

About a quarter to six that evening a division of enemy destroyers came steaming rapidly down, picked

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them all up and landed them at Wilhelmshaven, where the *Nomad's* survivors were also found. Captain Bingham was awarded the Victoria Cross, and after the end of the war came back to continue his service in the Royal Navy as a great expert in the destroyer fraternity. This, of course, is exactly as it should be, but the story of that gallant brotherhood will always be cherished as a perfect example of its kind. "This attack," wrote Admiral Beatty, "will be passed down to history as one of the most stirring examples of fine leadership seen in the Royal Navy during the war."

Nomad, which, you will remember, was immediately behind *Nestor*, received her first hit on the upper deck, when the after torpedo-tube's crew as well as several engine-room ratings below were killed outright. Another hit cut the main steam-pipe and covered the ship in white cloud till she lost all way and stopped. Then the German main battle fleet came along and shelled her till she was, in the words of a surviving officer, "like a Gruyère Cheese." But the destroyer fired her last torpedo and then sank, as her crew went for a swim, but were picked up by a German destroyer.

Nicator had gone into action immediately following astern of *Nomad* at thirty-four knots, but soon after the attack had started *Nomad* had commenced dropping behind and told *Nicator* to take station ahead of her. *Nicator* reached an excellent position for firing her first torpedo, which was done at about 6000 yards, and was able to shell the enemy destroyers with good effect so that one or two were certainly sunk. But, as already indicated, her captain, Lieutenant Jack E. A. Mocatta, by the cool and brilliant handling of his ship saved her from being hit when the enemy's battle-cruisers subjected the *Nicator* to a heavy fire. She was able to loose off a second torpedo at 5000 yards, and a third at 3000 yards. She would have succeeded even in firing a

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fourth, and had penetrated up to within 2500 yards of the enemy's battle fleet, when *Nestor* received her hit in the boiler-room, swerved out at right angles to her course, so that *Nicator* was obliged to steer inside her in order to avoid collision, being thus unable to carry out her bold attack further. The signal was now sighted recalling these destroyers, and on her way back towards Beatty's force, bearing approximately west, *Nomad* was observed stopped. *Nicator* offered her assistance, but *Nomad* with unselfish courtesy declined and told the *Nicator* to carry on.

It is the custom in the Royal Navy to have tea at seven bells—3.30 p.m. : therefore, in the *Moorsom*, at least, this was an interrupted meal for some officers, who had no sooner gone below into the ward-room than the alarm bell started ringing from the bridge. Away the *Moorsom* tore through the smooth sea astern of *Nicator*, soon to find herself in that preliminary and picturesque battle-within-a-battle when British and German destroyers, on opposite courses, were dashing by at over thirty knots, or a total speed of an express train. It is interesting to observe from the various narratives of different British destroyer officers how disappointed and surprised they were to find a significant absence of that "death or glory" manner in the fifteen German destroyers' attacks. On the other hand, it is a fact that the latter ships were inferior as to size and armament though superior in concentrated numbers during this miniature battle.

Like her sisters, the *Moorsom* made torpedo attacks on the enemy's battleships, and was extremely lucky to emerge as she did. One shell certainly felled the mainmast, which is not a very formidable affair in such a craft, only one man was slightly wounded, and there were a few holes ; but that frail affair, the after shelter, was blown over the side, which, in spite of the anxiety

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of the moment, caused no little amusement. For there was one particular seaman who a week previously, as a punishment, had been compelled to spend some time painting the inside of this shelter white. It so happened that when this erection now suddenly disappeared he was standing close by, glanced in its direction, and was heard to remark : "There goes my something White City !"

Of those other two divisions (led respectively by *Narborough* and *Obdurate*), the *Petard*, *Nerissa* and *Turbulent* succeeded in firing torpedoes at 7000 yards against the enemy's battle-cruisers ; and on the way, during the miniature battle, *Petard* claimed to have sunk one of the German destroyers by a well-directed high-speed torpedo, and we know from the German report of Admiral Scheer that two of his destroyers were sunk. After using up all her torpedoes *Petard* was rejoining Beatty's battle-cruiser line, which by this time was steaming to the north with a view of joining Jellicoe's Battle Fleet that was proceeding south. *Nestor* was passed on the course, and a little later on a man was seen swimming about in an oil patch ; he was picked up, and found to be a petty officer from the sunk *Queen Mary*.

During this first phase of Jutland fighting our destroyers had, in the words of Admiral Jellicoe, displayed "the utmost gallantry in most trying circumstances." All those long months of training and waiting had proved the value of team work and of personal initiative. But there were two more stages in which these fast flotillas were to be called upon to demonstrate their high efficiency and daring. Just before six that evening Beatty's battle-cruisers had made junction with the leading ships of Jellicoe's Battle Fleet, and thus the second phase began.

Now Rear-Admiral Hood, commanding the 3rd

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Battle-cruiser Squadron, in accordance with Admiral Jellicoe's instructions had gone ahead in single column to the southward at twenty-five knots in order to meet and reinforce Admiral Beatty. With him as a submarine screen Admiral Hood had the four destroyers *Shark*, *Christopher*, *Ophelia* and *Acasta*, the leader of this division being Commander Loftus Jones in the *Shark*. Actually Admiral Hood's squadron had sighted the German battle-cruisers before getting in contact with Beatty's. But first of all came the enemy's light cruisers and destroyers, which were evidently about to attack Hood's squadron with torpedoes. This was about ten minutes to six. Commander Loftus Jones now led his division into action and succeeded in frustrating the torpedo attack on our battle-cruisers. German shells, however, came along and did a certain amount of damage to the division. But after twenty minutes *Shark*, having succeeded in her duty, turned the division to port away from the enemy to rejoin Hood. It was at this moment that *Shark* had become disabled after her determined and gallant effort, and then came three enemy vessels out of the mist further punishing her, causing heavy casualties, Commander Loftus Jones being one of the wounded.

That which follows is yet another exemplification of the remarkable spirit which animated these destroyer flotillas, and the heroic incident is comparable only with that of *Nestor's* bravery already noted. *Shark* was seen to be stopping, with steam pouring out of the engine-room, and evidently in a bad way. The pipes to her oil-suctions had been damaged, which was the immediate cause for her halting, and the fore steering gear was put out of action, being presently shot away altogether. Perceiving the situation, Lieut.-Commander John O. Barron in *Acasta* returned to give assistance, but *Shark's* captain refusing to endanger a

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second destroyer sent him away. At this juncture two big shells entered *Acasta* both forward and aft, wrecking the steering gear, igniting the engineer's store, smashing the dynamo, filling the engine-room with steam, causing every man there who had not been killed to come on deck. For the next twenty minutes it was impossible to steer or stop *Acasta's* engines, and during nearly the whole of this time she was under extremely heavy fire.

But she managed to eject her foremost torpedo at the leading enemy battle-cruiser, and at six o'clock also claimed to have torpedoed a cruiser. *Shark's* death agony now began, but she perished in a manner that makes one long for words adequate for her commemoration. Here she lay alone, a target for the enemy's ships and destroyers, a poor helpless mass of inert shattered steel ; yet surely a halo of golden glory just then must have begun to encircle her. One of the most human and graphic personal accounts which ever came out of Jutland is that of *Shark's* torpedo coxswain, Petty Officer W. C. R. Griffin, who, in his own simple language and without worrying about punctuation, makes one actually and vividly live through that historic scene. After having stated that *Shark* went into action at twenty-five knots, he goes on to say :—

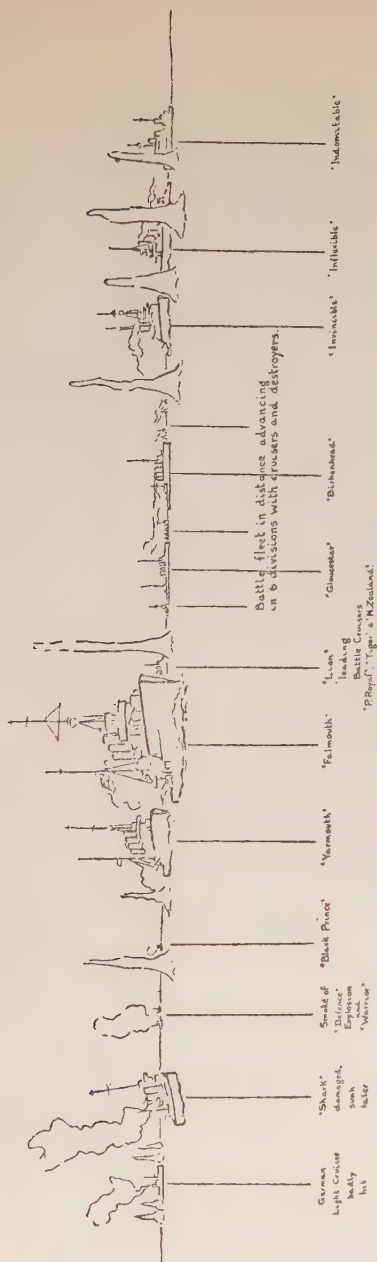
“ The signal was made open fire, in which we altered course to Port, the course being N.E., the Starboard guns being used. Again we altered course to Port, the course being N., it was then that our steering was hit, I report steering gear gone, Sir, which the captain gave orders to me to man the after wheel, it was then that I got wounded in the head and over the right eye, we then went to Starboard making use of our guns on the Port side, this was when the Forecastle gun's



THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND, 6.21 p.m., May 31, 1916.

From a Drawing by Commander H. L. Boyle, R.N., who was present.

The damaged destroyer "Shark" is on the left of the picture. (See key to picture.)



THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND, 6.21 P.M., MAY 31, 1916.

Key to the drawing by Commander H. L. Boyle, R.N. (See picture.)

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crew were completely blown away, gun and all ; about this time the *Acasta* asked if he could assist us, and the captain replied don't get sunk over us, we then with our steering gear and engines out of action, she was helpless and with only one gun firing which was the midship gun, and the captain came off the bridge and spotted for the midship gun, during that time he gave me orders for the boats and rafts to be lowered and got out, but the boats was useless. . . . We were about half an hour in action when our engines stopped, she was battered about by shell, and began to settle down at the bows. At this time the gunlayer, J. Howell, A.B., was wounded in the left leg, it was about a minute afterward, the captain had his leg shot away, the shell not exploding. C. Hope, A.B., left the gun and assisted the captain, doing what he could to it. It was about five minutes afterwards that the ship sunk. Captain gave orders to save yourselves, the two rafts were filled up (the third raft could not be got out owing to shell-fire), and as time went on the men began to gradually die away with exposure, the water being very cold." *

Commander Loftus Jones had been a real leader to the very end. The last torpedo was just being placed in the tube when a shell hit it, causing explosion and dreadful casualties. But surviving officers and men had still kept on firing their only gun ; and even after the captain had lost his leg he still continued to direct the firing, until at last *Shark's* condition and approaching enemy destroyers warned him that his ship might fall into the hands of the Germans. He therefore gave orders for the *Shark* to be sunk, but countermanded these orders when presently he found that his remaining gun could still be fought. Two light-grey destroyers

* Cmd. Paper 1068.

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were attacking at short range, but with her only gun left *Shark* drove one away and also hit the second. However, the latter managed to fire two torpedoes at about 1500 yards, one of which hit *Shark* abreast the after funnel. Commander Loftus Jones had been very particular to see that the white ensign was flying till the last ; so, finally, enduring stoically his own physical agony as his beloved *Shark* was bravely bearing hers, ship and captain went down together and alone, with colours flying, in the most glorious of deaths about 7 p.m. For this episode he was awarded posthumously the Victoria Cross. Only seven survivors were picked up, and six were awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. These consisted of Petty Officer Griffin, already mentioned, one Stoker Petty Officer, and four A.B.'s, who were rescued more dead than alive at ten o'clock that night by the Danish s.s. *Vidar*, which brought them into Hull ; another instance of the sea's brotherhood. A seventh man had died after being rescued.

Acasta continued for some time to give her own people, and indeed other ships also, a thrilling time. Like some wild, fiery steed she galloped about without being able to be steered or stopped, crossing the bows of Beatty's *Lion*, narrowly escaping a heavy salvo, rushing through British destroyer flotillas, just missing being run down by the Grand Fleet, and barely avoiding the battleship *Marlborough*, which almost rammed her ; for *Marlborough* at that moment was torpedoed, swung over to starboard, and thus by narrow chance collision was avoided. After the fleet had passed, *Acasta* declined assistance, and when darkness fell she had the lonely North Sea to herself. By midnight the steering engine and steam-pipes had been temporarily repaired, and she began to crawl slowly, making not more than three knots, an ideal target for any U-boat. After a

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short while it was found that she had very little oil fuel left that was any good, she was making hopeless progress, and the outlook was scarcely encouraging.

Dawn came and there was no ship in sight, though German wireless signals had been heard during the dark hours. Wind and sea had followed the misty calm, and then during the forenoon a destroyer of sorts was seen coming up from the southward. A German! *Acasta's* guns were manned and another action seemed to be imminent, but the stranger made the correct challenge, though *Acasta*, having no searchlight signalling apparatus left, was unable to reply. Presently the destroyer turned out to be the *Nonsuch*, who took *Acasta* in tow and brought her to Aberdeen on the evening of 2nd June.

The *Badger*, one of Admiral Beatty's destroyers, had an exciting time in her own particular sphere. Whilst she was steaming along there suddenly emerged from the mist the Grand Fleet, bearing down "like an avalanche," and now joining contact with Beatty's battle-cruiser force. *Badger* was nearly in collision, but just managed to squeeze through the gap, and then *Lion* signalled her to pick up survivors from a wreck on the starboard side. Commander G. A. Fremantle, *Badger's* captain, assumed this wreck to be some German vessel, so an armed guard was detailed, the ship's surgeon warned to be ready for wounded prisoners, and, having reached the area (where the sea was a mass of floating kit bags, hammocks and other jetsam, a raft with four men and two other men in the water), the whaler was lowered and sent away in charge of the gunner, armed with service revolver. Judge of the surprise when the raft was found to contain Commander Dannreuther, R.N., another officer and two seamen, all British. They were survivors from Admiral Hood's flagship *Invincible*, which had gone down. The other

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two men also rescued by *Badger* were the only six alive out of *Invincible's* thousand. But that armed guard was the cause of no little amusement to Commander Dannreuther.

Earlier in this chapter mention was made of that beautiful new destroyer *Onslow*, and it was her privilege to play a conspicuous part in this Jutland battle. She was one of Beatty's units, had been temporarily detached to act as anti-submarine screen to the seaplane carrier *Engadine*; yet after the latter's seaplane returned, the *Onslow* was able to rejoin Beatty's battle-cruisers, but well ahead, and with the destroyer *Moresby* closed the enemy. Thus, whilst Beatty was bringing his force to the north before joining up with Jellicoe's battle fleet, *Onslow* and *Moresby*, like a couple of eager hounds, were hastening to carry out a torpedo attack on their own, harrying the head of the enemy's line. *Moresby* managed to fire one torpedo, which was claimed as a hit on the rear battle-cruiser. But Lieut.-Commander J. C. Tovey, of *Onslow*, realising how heavily these two destroyers were being shelled by the enemy and that this gunfire would prevent nearer approach, decided to reserve his torpedoes till a better opportunity presented itself. Under cover of a smoke screen, but with salvoes of shells hitting the water and bursting all round very close, *Onslow* and *Moresby* steamed to take station on the *Lion's* engaged bow, and thus be in an excellent position for repelling German destroyers from attacking Beatty's battle-cruisers.

But then, during all this noise of action and the tense thrill of high speed, about five minutes past six *Onslow* sighted a three-funnelled enemy light cruiser, and sallied forth to frustrate her firing torpedoes at Beatty's line. At a range of from 2000 to 4000 yards *Onslow* was able to engage her with fifty-eight rounds from the destroyer's guns. Next, enemy battle-cruisers were

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sighted, so *Onslow* steamed towards them until 8000 yards away, and had just fired one torpedo when the destroyer was struck by a shell on the starboard side and enveloped in clouds of steam. This shell, after passing through several steel bulkheads, burst in one of the officers' cabins, tore away the deck and part of the ship's side. But a second torpedo was fired, seen to hit that three-funnelled cruiser and to explode.

There still remained two torpedoes, but *Onslow* was badly wounded and her speed had dropped from thirty knots to ten, yet the engineer officer reported that this rate could be maintained for a little longer. Tovey therefore with gallant determination, before his ship should be finally crippled, decided to make a still further attack. The chance was that with her reduced speed *Onslow* would become an easy and certain target ; but £1000 torpedoes are carried not as mere destroyer ornaments, so again she steered towards the enemy. Both missiles were satisfactorily fired towards the enemy line, though it was impossible to follow their track with the eye for any distance.

Onslow was amazingly fortunate to emerge alive and was retiring towards the British line when two more shells hit her in the boiler-room, and at 7 p.m. she had gradually come to a stop whilst still short of the British battle line. Alone in another "No Man's Sea," between the two rival fleets and belching forth great steam clouds, past her came tearing H.M.S. *Champion* with her destroyer flotilla, who offered assistance ; but the loss of *Onslow's* electric current prevented a reply being flashed to *Champion's* searchlight signal, made of course by means of a Morse shutter. There followed busy minutes stopping the shell-holes, whilst in the distance the shifting scene of battle removed itself to the south-east, together with the thunder of heavy gunfire and the shrill shriek of shells.

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An unwonted and artificial calm had settled down, but there was no telling how long this suspense would last.

And then at a quarter past seven another destroyer, *Defender*, hove in sight, who, in spite of the fact that she herself was so wounded that she could do no better than ten knots, offered help, and took *Onslow* in tow just at a time when large enemy ships were seen approaching and a few big shells dropped pretty near. But progress ahead was now made to the westward just as dusk was setting in. The barometer was falling fast, a fresh south-west wind kicked up a tiresome short steep sea, several times the tow rope parted, yet after a while the Engineer Lieut.-Commander managed, by using salt water, to raise enough steam for slow speed and the use of the steering engine. This enabled *Onslow* to be controlled in her yawing movements and to ease the strain on the towing hawser. She was seriously flooded with water aft, the oil-pipe system for getting the fuel to the boilers was out of action, so the strange sight was seen of most hands busy transferring oil from one tank to another by means of every pot and pan available.

Owing to the bad weather it was now a race against time, and yet no greater speed was possible. As to their wireless, *Onslow* was able still to receive but not to transmit messages. *Defender* was able to do both. Signals were heard from *Champion* instructing her flotilla to search for *Onslow*, but neither the latter nor *Defender* could report their position, since they did not know it, their compasses were out of adjustment, and their sextants had been broken in the battle. The anxious night passed and the towing continued through the first day of June ; but in the evening a wireless signal was intercepted that a division of destroyers was proceeding at a certain speed and along such a course as would certainly meet with these two lame ducks.

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This intelligence merely gave a good warning, for the destroyers' guns were still intact, there was plenty of ammunition, and only three of *Onslow's* crew had been killed ; but the ship's fighting spirit was still magnificent, and her captain had told *Defender* that when the enemy should appear, *Onslow* would take on the job and *Defender* must try and escape.

This decision sufficiently indicates the sense of brotherhood that the least able should be ready to make sacrifice in order to save the other. But happily that division, though it was not encountered, was really a group of British destroyers misreported. And so this night passed also, and by the afternoon of 2nd June the port of Aberdeen was safely reached, whilst *Defender* steamed down to the Firth of Forth. Repairs and greatly-deserved leave to both crews were the next consideration. *Defender*, by the way, had only just come out of dockyard, for she really belonged to Sheerness, and had been sent to have her periodical refit on the Forth. This had been completed only as recently as noon of 30th May. She had filled up with oil and ammunition, and was just about to go back to her station when she suddenly to her surprise received orders to raise steam for full speed and join up with Beatty's force ; so at 9.30 that same night she was under way with the rest of the fleet, knowing nothing of what was impending. Indeed, the first intimation of anything out of the normal was at 3.45 on the afternoon of 31st May, when a signal was received that the enemy had been sighted. *Defender* had received a 12-inch shell, which came in sideways, making an 8-foot hole, and brought up in the bottom of the ship without exploding. It started a furious fire among the oil fuel, but this was put out by sand ; and by wonderful bravery the men in the boiler-room managed to shut off the stop valves.



H.M.S. "NERISSA"

One of the destroyers at Jutland.

(See page 118)

(Imperial War Museum photograph. Copyright reserved.)



BRITISH DESTROYERS

Steaming in single-line ahead.

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Thus, nothing but sound team work, personal pluck, good seamanship and a fine lofty spirit to persist through to success had enabled this and other destroyers in daylight to carry out their tremendous duties amid those trying circumstances. The first and second phase had proved that in dash and tactical ability the British destroyer force, which owed so much to long years of training and successive commanding officers, was at the top line of competence. Many years before there had come over it the strong organising personality of that senior officer, Sir Lewis Bayly, who at this date of Jutland was the Vice-Admiral Commander-in-Chief in Ireland ; but that same stern, striving discipline towards absolute perfection had been handed on and down each month. There is something in destroyer work so individualistic and yet so fundamentally based on sea brotherhood that no words can exaggerate the unique character of flotilla life, whether in peace training or in that supreme test when the signal is hoisted for these craft to leave the line and rush across "No Man's" area to the enemy's bows. It is essentially a service only for hand-picked people.

Now the third phase came when these mosquito craft could be used between sunset and dawn. Night operations are very much the work of destroyers, for which they are specially trained ; and yet the problem at Jutland was complicated, as Lord Jellicoe has pointed out, by the fact that the searchlight and night-firing arrangements in the British Battle Fleet were not yet of the best. Therefore he could place no dependence on beating off by gunfire German destroyer night attacks. Furthermore, if our own destroyers were disposed ahead, in order to frustrate such attacks, the former would be taken for the enemy and fired on. The Commander-in-Chief therefore did two things, and it is essential to appreciate this before we continue.

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Firstly, he deliberately avoided seeking a night attack between the heavy ships, since this would necessarily have attracted torpedo onslaughts from enemy destroyers. Secondly, he placed his own destroyers in a position where the chance of their coming in contact with our own ships was remote, yet one favourable for attacking during night the enemy's heavy ships ; for this reason our destroyer flotillas, six in number, at 9.45 p.m. were ordered to take station five miles astern of the Battle Fleet. These were under the command of a Commodore in the *Castor*, and no collection of vessels had a more thrilling series of adventures than the Fourth Flotilla this night. This is their remarkable saga.

CHAPTER VII

IN THE NIGHT

THE group consisted of the following twelve destroyers : *Tipperary*, *Spitfire*, *Sparrowhawk*, *Garland*, *Contest*, *Broke*, *Achates*, *Ambuscade*, *Ardent*, *Fortune*, *Porpoise* and *Unity*. The first five mentioned comprised one division, and the second division consisted of the remaining seven, *Tipperary* and *Broke* being the respective leaders.

This night of 31st May-1st June was dark, the sea was fairly calm at first, and the craft were, of course, steaming with lights out. They had been under way ever since leaving Scotland on 30th May; they had passed through one hectic late afternoon and every one aboard was keyed up to the maximum of suppressed excitement. Just about 11.30 p.m. *Tipperary* was steaming with her sisters at seventeen knots, when the dim outlines of three four-funnelled light cruisers were sighted on the starboard beam. At first they were taken for some of our own vessels; *Tipperary* made the challenge, but this was answered by all three cruisers switching on their searchlights and concentrating their blinding glare on *Tipperary's* hull. At once there poured in a heavy and accurate series of salvoes, which began by hitting this flotilla-leader forward. Even then for a brief space of time those in *Tipperary* and *Broke* still considered that some unfortunate mistake had been made and that these were our own light cruisers. But by means of one stray beam, which fell on the rearmost stranger, there was now no possible question; this was a German squadron right enough.

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Tipperary opened fire with guns and torpedoes. *Broke* also fired her after torpedo tube, which claimed a hit. Now this action, severe though it was, lasted not more than about three minutes. The enemy turned off all lights and disappeared. But *Tipperary* was already shrouded in vapour, a shell having struck a steam-pipe; and then she was found to be stopping and badly on fire forward. Nearly everybody was either killed or wounded amidships, and boxes of cartridges were exploding one after another. The captain was among those killed, all the boats had been smashed, but the Carley floats remained and were got into the water. The remaining torpedoes were fired to prevent exploding, and then the order was given, "Everybody aft!" *Tipperary* now heeled over, her bows went under, and then the confidential books having been destroyed, there was shouted that significant order, "Everybody for himself!" One minute later the *Tipperary's* stern was up in the air and she had gone. Acting Sub-Lieutenant N. J. W. Williams-Powlett, R.N., after swimming about in the water for about an hour, reached the Carley float, where thirty men had collected. Of their fate we shall learn presently.

Broke, after firing her torpedo, had gone steaming full speed into the darkness with nothing in sight but that burning mass which once was *Tipperary*. Inasmuch as *Broke* has had one of the most amazing careers of any warship that was ever built, it may be well to get a clear mental idea of this extraordinary vessel, for we shall have to mention her more than once. When the war broke out she was being built by Messrs J. Samuel White & Co. at Cowes as the *Almirante Goni* for the Chilean Navy; but the British Admiralty took her over, and a most valuable acquisition she became. This flotilla-leader, or big destroyer, is of

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1700 tons displacement, measuring 320 feet long. She has triple screws, a speed of $31\frac{1}{2}$ knots and six 4-in. quick-firers, placed two on the fo'c'sle, two at the break of the fo'c'sle and two right aft. She has also four torpedo-tubes. With her four funnels and great length she is an extremely interesting ship, quite apart from her adventurous record. She must, indeed, have been one of those craft that are fated for exciting events, for she had not been long in the Royal Navy before she collided with the British light cruiser *Bellona*, receiving her first damage ; and now in this historic night at Jutland she was to keep up her character.

After easing to seventeen knots she looked round to collect her division again, with a view to making another attack on those three cruisers, no other destroyer being visible at the time. But now the hull of some large ship showed up through the night about half a mile away. *Broke's* captain, Commander W. L. Allen, gave the order to challenge, but almost simultaneously the stranger challenged by some green and red lights, which at once proved she was an enemy. Fire was opened by *Broke*, full speed ahead was ordered, but within a few seconds the enemy had switched on a blaze of blinding searchlights and then came an avalanche of screaming shells all round the destroyer, whilst the latter's 4-inch guns barked back.

About this time *Sparrowhawk* had been sighted and took station astern, but next a heavy salvo hit *Broke*, she gave a lurch, and there was a sound of debris flying around. Commander Allen gave the order, "Hard a port !" but there came no response ; so the navigating officer jumped down to the lower bridge and there in the darkness found utter chaos, the quartermaster dead at his wheel, the telegraph man dead at the engine-room telegraphs, wheel and telegraphs shattered, the helm having jammed hard a starboard.

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The navigating officer and the midshipman were just starting to strike matches and make certain, when the captain's voice was heard shouting down the pipe, "Full speed astern." And then came a terrific crash, hurling the two officers against the bridge screens, the ship being brought up all standing.

It was then seen that *Broke* had rammed *Sparrowhawk*, and there was a nasty rent on the latter's starboard side abreast the bridge. Steam was now pouring out of the *Broke's* foremost boiler-rooms, she was settling by the bow and giving occasional ominous lurches. On going down to the fo'c'sle to investigate the damage, *Broke's* navigating officer was surprised to find standing there a strange officer. "Who the hell are you?" came the query. He turned out to be the *Sparrowhawk's* sub-lieutenant, who, together with three of her men, had been pitched by force of collision into *Broke*.

The enemy battleship had now ceased firing, but *Broke* was in a bad way and might be attacked again at any moment. Ladders were gone, scalding steam was hissing up from a dozen places, but the engines were at last stopped. For a while the two ships were locked together, but the after steering gear was soon connected up, engines put astern, and the two got clear, yet not one second too early, for now a still more remarkable thing happened. Both ships had believed themselves to be sinking, both captains had therefore sent some of their men aboard the other, and then there suddenly came the destroyer *Contest*, which went crashing into the *Sparrowhawk's* stern, cutting off about five feet of her and jamming the rudder hard a port. The unfortunate *Sparrowhawk* was thus crippled at both ends. We shall return to her presently, for the story becomes more thrilling at every stage.

In the *Broke* there had been heavy casualties from

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the enemy, but soon after midnight the bulkheads had been shored up, holes plugged, and with three boilers intact she began to steam ahead at ten knots to the north. Most of the forward part was flooded. There were thirty-four officers and men wounded, and there were forty-two dead, who were committed to the deep as soon as possible. By bad and inconvenient luck the surgeon was among the latter, and six men were missing. Three enemy ships were now sighted, but passed on without noticing *Broke*. At 1.15 a.m. two German destroyers closed the *Broke* at full speed, beginning some challenge, of which the first letter was "K." *Broke* then challenged and was answered by the beam of a searchlight and shells. Now the British destroyer had serviceable only the two aft guns and no searchlights. She was struck amidships, but fired her port gun, seen in the accompanying picture. This evidently scared the enemy, who, after approaching to within 500 yards, sheered off.

After proceeding on a northerly course, the weather got so bad on the night of 1st-2nd June that the *Broke* rolled her mast over the side, most of the rigging having been shot away. The bulkheads would obviously not stand the strain of buffeting much longer, so at 4 a.m. it was necessary to up helm and run away to the south-east before a strong N.W. breeze, stern on to sea, going dead slow. And it was no consolation to realise that this course would bring *Broke* to Germany. But about sunset wind and sea began to go down, and gradually she was able to haul her wind to the westward, so that about eight that night she was on a course which eventually brought her to the Tyne, off which she arrived at 5 p.m. on 3rd June, when she was escorted in by some destroyers from the Forth. It had been a long and exceptionally trying trip, but some remains of charts had been found and spread out in the ward-

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room, the sub-lieutenant's sextant and the ship's chronometers had been undamaged, though the compass forward had of course been smashed.

We must now return to the *Sparrowhawk*. After *Broke* had left (with, incidentally, twenty-three of her ratings on board the *Sparrowhawk*), the latter managed to extricate herself from the *Contest* and proceeded a while on a westerly course (with fifteen of *Broke's* crew on board), but minus stern, bow, mast, foremost funnel, charthouse, bridge and a few little things of that kind ! The marvellous fact was that she could steam at all, but, as in the other destroyers, there was no lack of grit and enterprise. The bulkheads were shored up, confidential documents were as a precaution burned in the furnaces, and now it began to blow, which in no way lessened the general anxiety. But at two that morning there arrived a German destroyer, and evidently another engagement was to begin. *Sparrowhawk* had now one torpedo left and one gun serviceable aft, and if she must be destroyed she was going to give a fine account of herself till the last minute. The captain himself took on the duty of gun-layer in order to have his revenge, and the gunner was standing by his last torpedo. Everything was ready, orders had been given not to fire until the enemy attacked, for it was still hoped to save the ship, and she was really in no condition to seek battle.

The moments passed, the enemy approached to within a hundred yards and even stopped ; but evidently thinking that *Sparrowhawk* was too dangerous, started her engines and went off into the darkness. *Sparrowhawk's* progress had been very slight, and now she was unable to advance at all, for *Contest* had jammed the rudder hard over and *Sparrowhawk* could really do no better than steam stern first, dead slow, round and round. Every one was cold, each man was cheering

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up his companion, and then the night began to pass away ; but with the dim dawn there loomed up the blurr of some big ship. British ? All eyes peered through the weak light eagerly, and glasses were focussed on to her. And then, at this hour when human energy is always at its weakest, the dreadful disappointment was realised that she was a three-funnelled German cruiser.

Again followed keen suspense, ammunition was being got ready for a long fight aboard the destroyer, and the minutes ticked on, but still the enemy never fired. One German shell would just about finish *Sparrowhawk*, but it had not come yet. And then a most dramatic thing happened as the light presently spread over the sea. Not only did the cruiser not open fire, but the *Sparrowhawk's* tired people suddenly saw the German heel slightly over, then settle down forward till she finally stood on her head and sank beneath the ruffled waves. A miracle of relief !

But there was another thrill to come. This was a little later, when one of *Sparrowhawk's* crew reported a submarine. Instantly the gun was manned again, but fortunately an officer with his glasses saw what it was and saved a horrible tragedy just in time. This object was no half-submerged hull, but a Carley raft. You may think it curious that the mistake should have been made, but exactly that same occurrence happened at a later date in the Irish Sea when a Q-ship was torpedoed, and the survivors were clinging to their Carley raft. A patrol trawler had sighted them, and was just about to open fire when the half-perished men began to sing " Tipperary " at the top of their voices. This saved them ; the trawler dismissed her gun's crew, steamed up and rescued them. I had the account direct from the Q-ship's captain, who was on the raft.

Now, most fortunately, *Sparrowhawk* was able

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occasionally to glimpse this other raft as it rose and fell in the North Sea ; and the men on the raft not merely saw, but put up a sheet as a sail, for the destroyer was unable in spite of all efforts to make the slightest progress. There was nothing for it, then, but that the raft should come over the waves to the destroyer. After some time that improvised sail and the paddles, which were always provided with the raft, enabled her to lessen the distance ; and then, if you please, once again the harsh strains of men's voices, singing "It's a long, long way to Tipperary," came over the sea. It needed an hour and a half before the men were finally alongside the *Sparrowhawk*, by which time they were all done. They were those survivors who had come from the destroyer *Tipperary*. Several of them had already died from exposure, another five died on the *Sparrowhawk's* quarter-deck, but most of the rest now collapsed. They were dosed with brandy and soon recovered.

The pluck and grit of these people were wonderful. Sub-Lieutenant Williams-Powlett was among the saved. Every man became full of glee at this change in fortune, and there was one fellow with a hole in his leg, yet so pleased with life as not to worry. But he did mention that a German lifeboat had that morning passed them full of men. The *Tipperary* crew had hailed and asked to be picked up, but the only reply given was to "Go to Hell!" Such was the enemy's conception of sea chivalry.

The *Sparrowhawk* had now a mixed crew representative of three destroyers, but she was no nearer being rescued, and then the sea became worse and worse, so that she seemed destined to sink. As for the *Tipperary's* men, they seemed to have come out of the Carley float into a foundering wreck. But at last three columns of smoke showed up on the horizon,

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which soon revealed themselves as British destroyers, with their flotilla-leader *Marksman*. The latter came alongside, ordered everybody out of the *Sparrowhawk*, and tried to take her in tow, but after three miles this was found a hopeless task, with ropes snapping in the short steep sea. Finally, as signals telling of submarines in the vicinity were received, instructions came from the Commander-in-Chief to sink her. Thus, the sad sight had to be witnessed of the *Sparrowhawk* going down, and even till the end she was reluctant to disappear, for it needed eighteen lyddite shells before she finally sank with colours still flying. Thus, when *Marksman* steamed into Scapa Flow she had on board representatives of half a dozen destroyer crews, and the guests were entertained not merely with every kindly comfort as between one sailor and another, but with detailed information concerning the rest of the fighting which had taken place. And yet all the story of heroism and unselfish devotion during those historic hours will never be known, for so many eye-witnesses perished, and others were far too modest to mention their own efforts.

There were, however, some wonderful examples of real virtuous patience and high-souled pluck which must be mentioned. There was in *Tipperary*, for instance, one man who was doing his bitter best and rendering first-aid to another badly wounded, but had with all his resource found himself baulked. Beckoning an officer, he asked, "What can I do with this 'ere, sir?" and indicated that part of the suffering man's thigh was gone. The officer was equally frustrated, but tenderly covered up the wound with a large piece of cotton-wool and then laid over him a blanket. The man, who must have been enduring terrible pain, at once expressed his gratitude. "Feels a lot better already, sir," he remarked.

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Now every sailorman knows the meaning of a "chummy ship." Two vessels whose work has often thrown them together, whose officers are friends to each other, whose men are pals, naturally take great interest in their mutual exploits. It so happened that the *Sparrowhawk* was chummy ship to *Spitfire*, and both were in *Tipperary's* division. On this memorable night *Spitfire* was steaming in single-line ahead, just astern of *Tipperary*, but just ahead of *Sparrowhawk*, and this story of *Spitfire's* nocturnal adventures is another real epic of the sea, another illustration of that perfect brotherly spirit and keen devotion to duty which so distinguished these flotillas. When about 11.30 p.m. *Tipperary* was first attacked by those three-funnelled cruisers, *Spitfire*, like *Tipperary* and *Broke*, had originally believed they must be British. *Spitfire* afterwards fired her torpedo at the second ship in the line; it was seen to hit, and then the enemy was observed to heel over and there appeared a dull red glow. "It struck me," stated one of *Spitfire's* officers, "as exactly like a large set piece at a firework display," for the conflagration began to spread all along. In order to distract the enemy's attention from the blazing *Tipperary*, *Spitfire* shelled the enemy, fired a second torpedo which passed ahead of the leading cruiser, and whilst *Spitfire* was reloading her tube with the remaining torpedo this destroyer was unfortunately hit by a terrific salvo, so that from her next astern she seemed to disappear in one great sheet of flame.

This salvo had penetrated the base of the second funnel, but it had also struck the davit by which the spare torpedo was being hoisted into the tube: the result was that the after gun's crew and torpedo party suffered heavy casualties. *Spitfire* fired a few more rounds at the enemy's searchlight, which now went out, and closed *Tipperary* after having been assailed

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at point-blank range. That *Spitfire* was still able to continue at all showed how difficult it is to hit the elusive destroyer in a night action. As *Spitfire* was approaching *Tipperary* the latter was illuminating the darkness with her burning wreckage ; her bridge, wheelhouse and charthouse being one mass of flames. And just at this moment there was a big surprise.

Two enemy cruisers on their way back to Germany suddenly darted into sight, and one of them, racing at full speed, was noticed to be crossing *Spitfire's* port bow. "She's going to ram us ! Hard a port ; full speed ahead both !" The captain had no sooner ordered both engines ahead, and, leaning over the bridge screen, shouted, "Clear the fo'c'sle," than there came the most awful crash as the two ships met almost end on, port bow to port bow. The destroyer was steaming at twenty-seven knots, and the enemy at twenty knots and more, or a combined speed of nearly fifty knots. This was a terrific moment : *Spitfire's* people were hurled across the deck, she made a terrible lurch, there were atrocious rasping bumps, and all the time the cruiser was firing her guns, which, luckily, could not be depressed sufficiently to hit, but the blast from the guns made a clean sweep of the *Spitfire's* decks, as if by the hot breath of a fierce cyclone. Foremast fell down, for'ard searchlight crashed on to deck, foremost funnel was hurled back, and, as the heavier ship's hull came rumbling, smashing down the destroyer's port side, there was a nerve-cracking sound of boats being splintered to bits, davits torn from their sockets, whilst overhead were the enemy's searchlight glare and a tornado of shells.

The captain, Lieut.-Commander C. Trelawny, R.N., had an incredible escape, for one shell passed so close over him on the destroyer's bridge as to remove his cap and leave a nasty wound, but all others on that

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bridge, with the exception of two men, were killed. The cruiser passed, but the *Spitfire* was now like hell let loose, and everything that could grieve the five senses was doing its devilry ; for, consider this destroyer's pitiable condition. Here she was shocked from bow to stern, trembling, drifting dazed, fires breaking out everywhere, and all the lights short-circuited, so that the bridge emitted electric shocks, and all the electric bells in the ship were ringing like mad demons. There was the smell of burning cocoa-nut matting, which always covers a destroyer's decks, flames were pouring out blood-red from the base of the second funnel, and every hose had been cut by splinters and was drenching passers-by. The surgeon probationer was working single-handed and amputating, without anæsthetic, a seaman's leg, whilst the fire party were working round him with their hose. For the next thirty-six hours this gallant doctor toiled at his job without a moment's rest.

In the meantime, the *Spitfire* herself needed a big operation, but it would have to be tackled, if she ever reached port, by the dockyard people. Sixty feet of her port side had gone, but the enemy had left twenty feet of her upper deck plating and anchor gear (eventually made into mementoes) ; but three out of the *Spitfire's* four boilers were in good condition, the bulkheads were holding all right, although the fo'c'sle had been torn open. One man had been lost overboard, either by collision or blast of guns, the captain had been blown twenty-four feet from the bridge, but he, the sub-lieutenant and the gunner now extricated themselves alive from the steel wreckage. And then came another nightmare.

“ Look out ! ”

Everybody suddenly glanced a few hundred yards to starboard, and then there showed up what seemed

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to be an enemy battle-cruiser on fire, but coming along at high speed like a monster of the night, aiming straight to ram the *Spitfire's* stern. "I believe the majority of us lay down and waited for the crash," related one of the destroyer's officers. "But no crash came. To our intense relief she missed our stern by a few feet, but so close was she to us that it seemed that we were actually lying under her guns, which were trained out on her starboard beam. She tore past us with a roar, rather like a motor roaring uphill on low gear, and the very crackling and heat of the flames could be heard and felt."

Soon afterwards she exploded, and there is reason now to believe that this was no enemy battle-cruiser, but H.M.S. *Black Prince*, about whose end there has always been some uncertainty. This cruiser had lost touch with her own fleet during the day action, and was now heading to the north-west. *Spitfire* refused to sink, but the sooner she got into port the better for all concerned; she was no longer useful as a fighting unit. So bits of a tattered chart were collected, a book-case batten was employed instead of parallel rulers, and a course laid down from a presumed position. She was able to go ahead at six knots without the bulkheads yielding, though all the collision mats, mess tables and other supports to fill that wounded bow were washed frequently out. All signalmen had been made casualties, all signalling lamps were gone, wireless was out of the question, wind and sea had risen by dawn, flooding store-rooms and lower mess-decks. But by the captain's orders a tot of rum was served all round, and brought good cheer in the chilly air; the galley, too, was fortunately intact. And then the dead had to be lashed up in their hammocks, with a shell at head as well as feet. Volunteers acted as bearers. White ensign was lowered half-mast, and

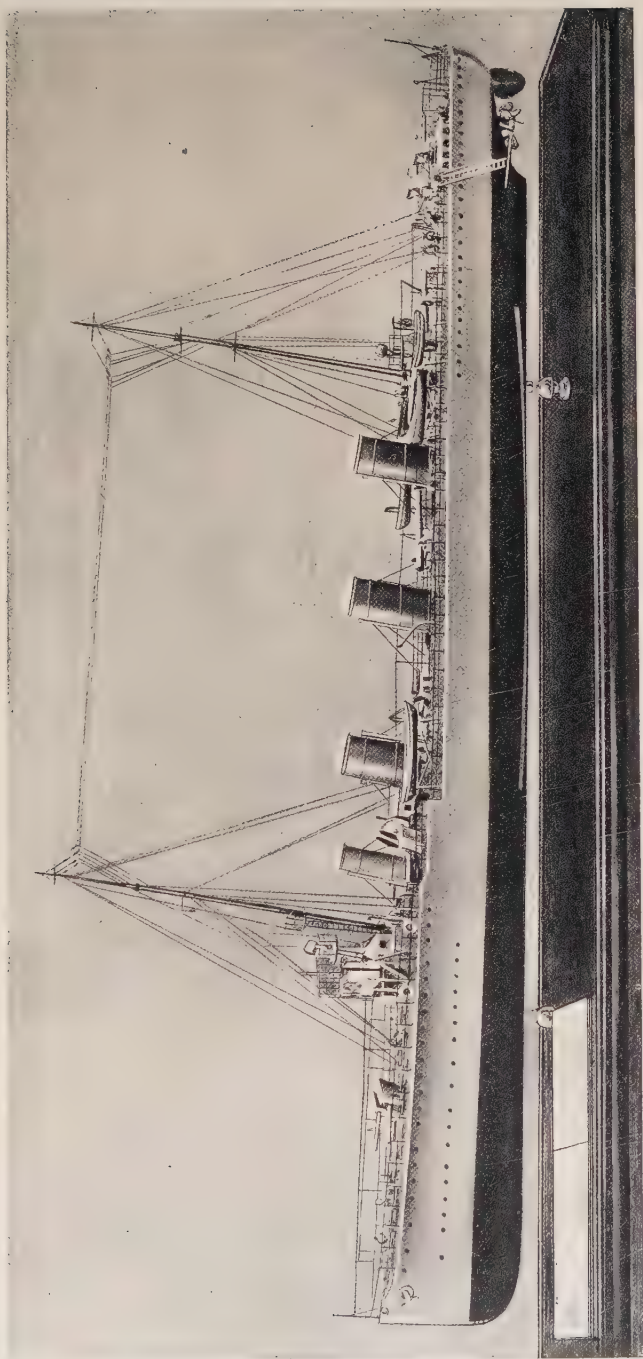
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then the captain read the burial service as he committed to those big seas the bodies of his loyal comrades who had fought under him so splendidly.

All the way up the North Sea was one long suspense ; there was always a possibility of the ship foundering, and there was quite a probability that enemy ships might still be encountered. But two gun-crews were ever ready. Only one vessel was sighted, and she a Norwegian, who offered to take *Spitfire* in tow ; but this was naturally declined. There came a time, however, about two in the early morning of 2nd June, when the weather got so bad that *Spitfire* was in gravest danger, but then a miracle rewarded their endurance, when the wind and sea died down. A patrol drifter was met—the position was ascertained to be twenty-two miles E.N.E. of the Tyne—into which *Spitfire* steamed proudly with every flag hoisted, and berthed alongside H.M.S. *Bonaventure*, who received them with brotherly hospitality, providing all the *Spitfires* with baths and a good meal, even sending a party to tidy up this tattered wreck that had been through hell and yet won through.

But there were destroyers far less lucky, and we must mention now *Fortune* and *Ardent*, whose careers during the war were curiously linked. In the previous October after leaving Scapa Flow, whilst the Grand Fleet were cruising about the upper part of the North Sea, *Ardent* and *Fortune* were in company and collided with each other, *Ardent* receiving much damage. It was *Fortune*, too, which in a heavy sea and by no little skill went alongside the sinking battleship *King Edward VII.* off the North of Scotland and took off many of her crew. You will remember that *King Edward* had struck a mine, on the 6th January 1916, which had been laid by a German steamship.

At Jutland these two destroyers had arrived with



H.M.S. "BROKE"
From a model of this historic destroyer.
(See page 132)

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Jellicoe's fleet, and were part of the Fourth Flotilla. During the night of 31st May—1st June they were, in accordance with the instructions already noted, steaming astern of the Grand Fleet, with the destroyers *Achates* and *Ambuscade* as their next ahead, *Garland* next astern, *Tipperary's* division being well out to starboard of them. Now when those large enemy ships appeared, and the leader made the challenge with a series of green and red lamps preparatory to opening fire, *Fortune* was at once hit. *Ardent* therefore altered course to starboard so as to try and aid *Fortune*. At 2000 yards' range *Ardent* fired a torpedo on her port beam at the leading German, which, in the words of *Ardent's* captain, Lieut.-Commander A. Marsden, "undoubtedly scored a hit, the explosion was seen, and the enemy ship's foremost searchlights went off."

The second ship then concentrated her searchlights and fired on *Ardent*, so the latter increased speed. But *Fortune* was really knocked out from the first, though *Garland* managed to escape. *Fortune* was, in fact, badly hit, on fire, apparently sinking; and yet she went down still using her guns against her big adversary in the most gallant manner. As to *Ardent*, she presently found her way barred by four large enemy vessels steaming at high speed. *Ardent*, seeing that it was too late to get out of this position, attacked the leading ship with a torpedo, and then received the most devastating fire from the first two vessels, who blazed their searchlights. This went on for five terrible minutes, by which time *Ardent* also was a sinking wreck, so all confidential books were "ditched," and then the captain had gone aft to try and make a raft—all boats and the Carley floats having been smashed to pieces—when the enemy resumed their appalling fire at point-blank range. Lieut.-Commander Marsden gave the order, "Save yourselves,"

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and two score of men leapt into the sea with nothing to support them other than lifebelts and life-saving waistcoats ; a desperate adventure.

With colours flying, *Ardent* then was received into the everlasting waters, whither her sister *Fortune* had gone. *Garland* went steaming in all directions for a half-hour looking for her flotilla mates in the hazy night, but it was her pathetic lot to find not one. Every officer and man aboard *Ardent* had fought with superb determination until there was not a gun in action ; and out of that gallant band only Lieut.-Commander Marsden, who was picked up by a destroyer after five hours in the water, and one man were saved. In that big affray *Porpoise* also had become involved, and whilst altering course to clear the stricken *Fortune* was hit by a shell which struck the base of the after funnel, killed two men, and either wounded or stunned others, besides exploding the spare torpedo, which blew in the deck and burst the main steam-pipe. The wheel and engine-room telegraphs on the forebridge had gone, but eventually by plugging the exhaust pipe *Porpoise* made progress and was able to send signals with her wireless. *Garland*, in response to these, spent the morning of 1st June seeking her. This was rather like looking for a nigger in a cellar, for *Garland* was vague as to her own position ; but after speaking a Danish vessel and obtaining the required information, *Garland* discovered her friend about noon doing no better than six knots, and escorted her in this fashion to the Tyne, when *Garland* went alongside and towed her up the river.

It is a bitter experience to lose one's ship even in action ; but it is the saddest event of a lifetime to lose one's shipmates, and you can guess some of the nervous and mental—yes, and physical—agonies through which Commander Marsden existed during those hours

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in the North Sea, for he was bleeding and had been wounded in the thigh with a piece of shell. Not merely had *Ardent* and *Fortune* been always working together in that flotilla for over two years, but the latter's commanding officer, Lieut.-Commander F. G. Terry, had been Marsden's contemporary and class-mate when cadets in the *Britannia*. Amid the depths of bitter grief and pain it is only the big and noble theme which can uplift and sustain. And whilst *Ardent's* captain floated in his cold and painful isolation up and down that North Sea, there were in his mind pictures, unforgettable and ineffaceable, of *Ardent's* company, magnificent in their cheery loyalty and tenacious gallantry. If anything could console a commanding officer, those remembrances of the last moments on deck had so acted.

The leading hand on the fo'c'sle encouraging his gun's crew to "give 'em one more"; the leading signalman with true pride of ship remarking that "the old *Ardent* had done her bit all right, sir"; Marsden's servant and another seaman coming aft to tend their captain, who sent them forward to tell every one to look out for himself—these human touches had their counterpart when all flopped into the dark sea. None of them showed any fear of death, there was not a complaint or a cry for help, but perfect discipline, as among a band of dying brothers. Many of them their captain was able to speak to, and most of them he saw die one by one, while to the last they talked in glorious gratitude of having "done their bit." Some were hanging on to their captain's body, but finally they lay back and were received into the sleep of death. You may search all the golden pages of our forefathers in their sailing ships and blunt warfare, but there is no chapter more stirring or more in accordance with sublime tragedy than this undying spirit in the hour

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of death. It is a proof that our traditional sea character did not pass away with Trafalgar ; far cleverer men in steel ships, experts in handling scientific and highly complicated gear, are at least the equal of their predecessors when it comes down to the real character test.

When the light returned that sad first of June, Marsden sighted an oar and placed it under his arms. Several times he dozed off until the waves slapped his face. Nature, through sheer exhaustion, again became drowsy, but this time there sounded a shout, and presently here was a destroyer alongside. It was *Marksman*, and a kindly seaman was calling, " You're all right, sir ; we're coming." It was only just in time, for the officer fell into oblivion and never awoke till an hour and a half later when the *Marksman's* guns opened fire. No ; it was not another action, but the sinking of the *Sparrowhawk*. You see *Marksman* had done some really fine rescue work, for when she at last reached port she carried besides her own crew representatives from the destroyers *Broke*, *Tipperary*, *Sparrowhawk*, *Ardent* and two raft-loads from *Fortune*, who were all brought into Scapa Flow.

It remains now only to mention the final fate of three units belonging to this immortal flotilla. *Achates* got back home, but had a narrow escape from colliding with *Broke* after the latter had become disabled. *Conquest* reached port with a broken stem ; *Unity* about midnight lost sight of her own flotilla, joined up with the 9th and 13th flotillas, searched for *Achates* in the morning, and then, being short of fuel, made for Aberdeen. *Ambuscade* had been brought safely out of action, solely because of her captain's able handling, after having fired all her torpedoes.

So much, then, for the amazing adventure of this gallant twelve, which are a history in themselves and

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must never be forgotten. But in their company, also stationed astern of the fleet during the night, were the following destroyers of the 13th flotilla, which, under Admiral Beatty, had already won honours in the afternoon :—*Narborough*, *Obdurate*, *Petard*, *Pelican*, *Nerissa*, *Moresby*, *Nicator*, *Termagent* and *Turbulent*. Half an hour after midnight a large enemy vessel making much smoke crossed the rear of this flotilla, switched on her searchlights and opened a heavy fire on *Petard* and *Turbulent*. *Petard* had no torpedoes left, so increased to full speed and altered course in order to avoid being rammed, clearing by not more than a couple of hundred yards—quite near enough when steaming at high speed on a dark night. But *Petard*, when once clear, received half a dozen hits, which, incidentally, disabled the after gun's crew, blew a hole in the ship's side, wrecked all officers' cabins, entered the stokehold, cutting an oil-pipe, which caused a considerable conflagration and made her a still more distinct target. Unfortunately, in this encounter *Petard's* surgeon-probationer was killed when his skill was most needed. But she was able to get back to the Forth with barely enough oil, and a U-boat lying in wait off the Farne Islands fired a torpedo, which passed, fortunately, between *Petard* and *Nicator*.

It was the unhappy lot of these two destroyers to have seen their flotilla-mate *Turbulent* perish, for when that large vessel came out of the darkness to the rear of our destroyer line, *Turbulent* was by the enemy both rammed and heavily shelled, so that she was never seen again and all hands were lost. But the 12th flotilla fought one of the fiercest and one of the most successful of all the actions at Jutland. This group consisted of the flotilla-leader *Faulknor* and the eight destroyers :—*Obedient*, *Mindful*, *Marvel*, *Onslaught*, *Maenad*, *Noble*, *Nessus* and *Narwhal*. The first division of this Grand

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Fleet Flotilla, consisting of *Obedient*, *Mindful*, *Marvel* and *Onslaught*, had already done good work when at 7.43 p.m. they attacked and sank an enemy destroyer.

Now it was soon after 1.30 a.m. that just as daylight was breaking there appeared a line of strange ships to starboard, steering a south-east course for German waters. It was not possible at first, by reason of the mist, to determine whether they were friend or foe. *Faulknor*, therefore, increased the speed of the flotilla and turned away to get ahead of these strangers. At twenty-five knots *Faulknor's* group approached the line at an angle of forty-five degrees, and now there was no uncertainty : here was a squadron of enemy battleships of the *Kaiser* type, but our destroyers had so far outwitted them—got the “weather gage,” as it would have been in the sailing-ship era.

At 2 a.m. the conditions were ideal for a destroyer attack, since it was too light for the searchlights to obtain a distinctive glare of illumination, and yet there was a nice mist so as not to outline sharply the destroyer shapes. Five minutes later *Faulknor* fired two torpedoes, the first at the second ship and the second at the third ship. The latter was most certainly hit, for she exploded with terrific force and went up in flames and wreckage, the range having been not more than 3000 yards. Whether it was *Faulknor's* second torpedo or one of the *Obedient's* which did the trick may never be known, but the team had done its job right enough. And then came the deluge. The surprised battle squadron started a deafening din of bursting shell around the destroyers with all calibres of guns and remarkable accuracy. You will remember that the new month was now only a couple of hours old ; and it was characteristic that when this battleship was seen to go up and the destroyers were amidst an inferno of shells, one of *Obedient's* crew was heard to remark,

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“Poor devils ! And they ain’t drawn their month’s money !” But the really surprising thing was that this flotilla was not finished off by all the concentrated heavy fire. They had used their own 4-inch guns at point-blank range against these battleships, and by quarter past two the incident had concluded. The flotilla had loosed off altogether seventeen torpedoes, as well as some hundreds of shells, yet not one destroyer had been lost. Luck may have had a little to do with it, yet zigzagging at high speed and good seamanship were principally responsible for the fact that the little ships had come out alive from an area that positively whistled with shells.

But this eager throng had escaped by no means without punishment. *Onslaught* was just about to make a smoke screen, and thus retreat after firing all four torpedoes, when *Nessus*, the next ahead, was hit by a shell, and another projectile struck *Onslaught’s* bridge, mortally wounding the captain, killing the First Lieutenant, coxswain, gunner and one signalman. Sub-Lieutenant H. Kemmis, R.N., therefore took command, found the wheel steering-gear ruined, so controlled her from aft. The charthouse with its charts and confidential books was on fire, but the conflagration was put out with some difficulty. The position now was that the *Onslaught* had no torpedoes, only two guns and only one officer, apart from Midshipman R. G. Arnot, R.N.R., the Engineer-Lieutenant-Commander and Surgeon-Probationer. She therefore was not of much value as a fighting unit, and proceeded to make for the Forth. By using an old chart, improvised instruments and a boat’s compass, and having ascertained her position from *Mindful*, this young officer, Kemmis, brought her across the North Sea and picked up May Island. Signalling with other destroyers met with on the way, and with a coastguard station ashore, was

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difficult, seeing that the searchlight and semaphore apparatus were gone, one signalman killed, and the other had lost an eye. But a torpedo-boat, now met, escorted her to the Forth Bridge, where she arrived late on the night of 1st June and landed her wounded and dead.

Maenad had been able to make a second attack a few minutes after the first, and thus was able to torpedo another enemy vessel. This was the fourth in the line, and the hit was amidships, causing a terrific explosion, apparently of her magazines, the flames reaching the tops of the masts. Soon after this *Maenad*, notwithstanding that enemy shells had fallen all round her, managed to emerge totally untouched and joined up with *Marksman*. At five that morning she came across a float with eleven men belonging to *Fortune*, picked them up, and also a floating body from *Ardent*. Then, after searching all day for any more lame sisters, *Maenad* returned to the Firth of Forth, took in oil fuel, torpedoes, ammunition, and within four hours was again ready to proceed. It was not till some weeks later, when her paintwork was being scraped, that a piece of splinter was found embedded in *Maenad's* side.

These gallant destroyers, then, proved at Jutland that the grand old spirit of the fighting service was still as triumphantly alive as in bygone sailing days. Those splendid frigate fights, which have been commemorated in fact, fiction, song and picturesque prints, now had their counterpart when these fast, modern destroyers with their torpedoes and 4-inch guns went into action. And I make no apology for stressing this unique brotherhood, for, as one of the surviving captains remarked quite recently, the public accustomed to think in terms of capital ships has failed to appreciate all that was done by the flotilla. This sea cavalry charging right up to the enemy created a new tradition

IN THE NIGHT

of devotion to duty, and a high standard which cannot fail to inspire this particular service in the future, but especially all young officers in the Royal Navy and Mercantile Marine.

The war had more than another two years to run before peace. These flotillas had still many thousands of miles to steam, and there were such special individual jobs as patrolling, escorting and even fighting. The *Broke*, for instance, after having been repaired and refitted, was in the following spring operating in the Dover Straits with the famous Arctic explorer Commander E. R. G. R. Evans as her new captain. And then on the night of 20th-21st April, together with that other flotilla-leader *Swift*, she encountered along the barrage a division of fast German destroyers. There followed that historic engagement, during which *Broke* deliberately rammed one enemy destroyer and completed the destruction of a second. It was, in fact, quite like the old frigate days, for there was also a real hand-to-hand fight on the *Broke's* fo'c'sle. Thus it came to pass that *Broke*, for the third time in her young life, had been in collision, and was now again repaired by dockyard hands. It is no small credit to her builders that she should have so survived each terrible shock. But whilst this third refit was proceeding, Captain Evans came over to us at Queenstown, and a few days later it fell to my lot to take him out and meet the first division of American destroyers arriving off Daunt's Rock lightship from across the Atlantic. From that memorable sunny day there began a new brotherhood of the sea when naval officers and men of the United States worked in the greatest harmony and fellowship with British crews till the conclusion of hostilities. These American destroyers, rather different in type from our own, toiled hard and vigilantly, escorting individual ships, convoying many

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liners and sinking the enemy submarine U-58. There was no better spirit of co-operation between allies during the war than that which prevailed between this American destroyer personnel and our own people. Captain Evans, straight from his night adventure in *Broke*, went out for a four-day patrol as the guest of Captain Taussig in the U.S.S. *Wadsworth*, and was able to "hand out the latest dope" concerning destroyer tactics.

And, surely, this is just as it should be : for in the great sea brotherhood there is a particularly strong tie that binds together those who go afloat in small ships. As to the *Broke*, she was repaired yet again, went to sea once more, and after the Armistice was sold to South America, where she now serves as the most historic vessel of her class ever built.

CHAPTER VIII

THE YOUNGEST BROTHERHOOD

WE have seen in previous pages something of that particular fellowship and special team work which characterises so markedly the destroyer flotillas. But now we are to consider another service whose history is as short as it has been distinguished ; and, indeed, one of the most admirable chapters that youthful dash and enterprise ever created, yet has likewise never been fully appreciated. It is another of those sections which must be studied by itself if we are to get anything like a fair idea of the magnificence in its daring undertaking. Unfortunately, during the war a strict censorship prevented the true story being told ; and in the years immediately after the war there was a reaction in the public mind against anything that suggested fighting. But since then there has grown up a fresh interest in these events both here and in America. The younger generation insist on being told all about these big events, that they too may consider how such trials would test the modern race ; and older men now able to look back at the past with the calm mellow judgment of middle age find a new fascination in considering the facts as an intelligible whole, rather than those isolated fragments with which for a period the heroic actors were concerned.

The Coastal Motor Boat Service came as the demand by youth, untrammelled by precedent, but fired with high imaginative zeal. It required specially created craft along new lines, with a speed as great as or even superior to the destroyer, necessitating a novel set of

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tactics and an entirely different personnel. All the gallantry, the élan, the unhesitating advance of the destroyer must be there ; but in this junior brotherhood the risks must be greater, the gamble for higher stakes and the thrill more satisfying. It was fundamentally an undertaking not for men of settled habits, but for those to whom excitement is the breath of life, such as junior lieutenants, sub-lieutenants and midshipmen. The youth who in peace time loved to break records with his motor-bicycle or high-speed car, or in the air performed breathless stunts, was of the same species as this younger band of seafarers. Thus, when it became instituted and organised, this Coastal Motor Boat section developed into a sort of kindergarten for potential V.C.'s. Its story, then, is twofold : the narrative of an idea, and of that idea put into brilliant practice by plucky young officers prepared to sell their lives in their assurance that the basic idea was sound. And if ever there was a brotherhood of the sea representative of modern youth, here it was with officers taken from the Royal Navy, Mercantile Marine and Yachtsmen ; whilst the rest of the personnel was selected chiefly from those clever mechanics who normally spend their hours attending to motors.

First of all, then, here was the idea. We must go back to the year 1873, when the British firm, Messrs John I. Thornycroft & Co., built a steel steam launch for the Norwegian navy, to carry the newly-invented torpedo. Other navies followed this example, but the first actual torpedo-boat for the British navy was not built till three years later. This was H.M.S. *Lightning*, a craft of thirty tons displacement and a speed of less than twenty knots. But a large number of small torpedo-boats were also constructed by them to be carried on board the big ships, and to weigh about ten tons. They were seen in such vessels as the ill-fated H.M.S.

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Victoria in 1887. The beautiful silver model in possession of His Majesty the King, at Windsor Castle, shows one of these little torpedo-boats very well, for they were hoisted out by special arrangement, and each of these little boats carried a couple of 14-inch torpedoes, which could be rapidly lowered into the firing position below the water-line. These boats were not able to steam at more than about seventeen knots.

In these small craft, capable of being hoisted in and out from bigger warships, yet fast and able to carry torpedoes, we have the germ of the new idea. As time went on this conception was developed along other lines, so that the torpedo-boat became independent, capable of keeping the sea, and finally grew into those small cruiser-like craft which we call destroyers. But, as we know from other spheres of life, an old idea often seems to die and then long afterwards it has need to be brought out afresh ; and it was so before the Great War had been going for several months. The problems which presented themselves were being worked out by two separate sets of minds : an engineering firm, and a small band of young naval officers. In the years immediately preceding August 1914, visitors to the Solent had noticed an interesting and novel type of motor-boat, named the *Miranda*. She was quite different in hull to the recognised type of pleasure craft, and she was able to develop the amazing speed of thirty-five knots and more. This achievement was the result of many years' experiments by a Fellow of the Royal Society, Sir John I. Thornycroft, and the chief secret lay in providing a hull that at high speed would not cut through the water, but would skim on the surface. Thus, by the early summer of 1915, Messrs Thornycroft were able to submit to the Admiralty plans of an improved *Miranda*, fitted up with gear for dropping a torpedo. The advent of the internal combustion

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motor, making great speeds possible, and the combined results of sport and scientific research (such as in experimental tanks), had thus improved the rough notion of 1876 into something vastly different.

But during those same early months of 1915, three young naval officers serving under Commodore Tyrwhitt, at Harwich, had been inspired with the desire to see high-speed torpedo motor-boats employed against the enemy. The names of this pioneer trio are : Lieutenant G. C. E. Hampden, R.N. ; Sub-Lieutenant W. H. Bremner, R.N. ; and Lieutenant G. F. V. Anson, R.N.V.R., who afterwards became Surgeon-Lieutenant, R.N. This, if you remember, was a time when the North Sea and German approaches were dangerous with mines, so that the movements of our naval forces were restricted. It occurred to these three officers that small shallow motor-boats might well be employed to rush across the minefields and attack the enemy bases. Commodore Tyrwhitt listened with sympathy to this proposal, even authorised them to approach Messrs Thornycroft and see what could be done.

The story now becomes unusually gripping, for it shows the triumph of faith over obstacles, until finally one long series of great victories was obtained. But, first of all, the requisites were to be as follows : weight of motor-boat not to exceed weight of ordinary 30-ft. motor-boat as carried in the light cruisers of Commodore Tyrwhitt's force, but this weight to include an 18-inch torpedo ; speed to be not less than 30 knots, with a full radius of action. Now this seemed an impossible proposition, for it meant that the weight which the cruiser davits could sustain must not exceed $4\frac{1}{4}$ tons, of which the torpedo alone amounted to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a ton. Furthermore, the *Miranda* type of racing boat, whose design would have to be followed,

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had never carried a greater load than two or three men and fuel enough for a short race. And they had been too light to permit of being slung in davits with even this weight.

But difficulties are merely obstacles intended for man's ingenuity and perseverance, so the result of much thinking and further experiments with models was a decision that such a craft could after all be constructed, and would need to be 40 ft. in length. The weight of the engines was determined by the assumption that 250 h.p. would be required ; this was the first requisite. And by a matter of simple arithmetic the difference between this weight and $4\frac{1}{4}$ tons showed how much was available for hull, torpedo and its discharging gear. The latter, by the way, created further difficulties ; for neither the old-fashioned dropping tackle nor the placing of the torpedo forward was satisfactory, and the ordinary destroyer system of a torpedo tube was out of the question because of weight. Ultimately, it was decided to build into the after part of the boat a trough with rails, the latter being extended beyond the stern of the boat, so that the torpedo would drop clear. It was cleverly considered that though the torpedo should be discharged tail first from the stern and not head first, as hitherto, the speed of a 30-knotter would be about that of the torpedo, and by quick manœuvre the boat would be able to get out of the course of its own missile. Experiments were made with an actual boat, which proved that this theory was sound ; and, finally, as the result of collaboration between these young officers—full of zeal and possessed of war experience in destroyers—and Messrs Thornycroft, the Admiralty ordered a dozen of these remarkable 40-ft. boats to be built.

It was now January 1916, and such was the necessity for secrecy that the work of construction had to take

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place on an island in the Thames. It is worth noting that they were built of wood rather than of steel because of requisite lightness and elasticity. By the month of April the first three boats had been completed, the officers had spent several weeks watching the engines being built, so as thoroughly to be conversant with every minute detail ; and the first sea trials showed that an average speed of 33.5 knots had been obtained, whilst the displacement of boat with fuel, crew, torpedo and gear was $4\frac{1}{4}$ tons. The other boats soon followed, and the first base was formed up the Medway at Queenborough, where the utmost secrecy was maintained, and the running was carried out very largely at night. As to the personnel, the officers were at first largely volunteers from the Harwich force, and it was decided that these 40-footers should have no other crew whatsoever except two officers to each boat ; but a corps of mechanics had to be formed and trained to overhaul and keep in condition the motors at the base. Such a class of specialists were not available in the Royal Navy and had to be found.

These little boats were controlled and fought simply double-handed, the two officers working the machinery, steering and discharging the torpedo, for which reason the firing lever was placed alongside the wheel. A hundred gallons of petrol could be carried, which gave a radius of 160 miles. By the end of the year 1916, four boats were sent over to Dunkirk, which was in effect an advanced base of the Dover Patrol, instituted with a view to the proximity of Ostend and Zeebrugge ; and it was only a question of time before these motor torpedo-boats—C.M.B.'s as they were always known—would be able to render good service. It is true that to some extent the original intention of using these craft from the davits of light cruisers was carried out ; but the tactics most usually employed were to employ

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them from a land base either individually or in divisions, so that they were not unlike tiny destroyers.

Their presence so near to the German advanced bases was now to be a continuous source of irritation and anxiety to the enemy, for a series of daring and successful attacks began with the new year. There were undoubtedly some narrow escapes, but during this stage only one officer, Lieutenant Anson, was hit from a machine-gun ; every boat got back safely, although several times the delicate aeroplane-like motors were hit. We can wish for no better praise of the C.M.B.'s than that given by Commander E. E. Schulze of the German Navy, who wrote : " We were particularly worried by the small British motor torpedo-boats, which, from the spring of 1917, were more and more in evidence. Their high speed and the difficulty of seeing them made these boats a danger not only to our submarines, which were forced to cruise on the surface in the shallow waters, but to all surface craft as well, and we were, therefore, compelled to abandon the practice of keeping our destroyers constantly on patrol before the swept channels."

These C.M.B.'s, so well handled and maintained in the highest efficiency, were a most valuable striking force, ready to dash out at a moment's notice, capable of taking short cuts over the sands, and further useful for patrolling the Belgian coast barrage, which we had instituted. Their only real enemy was the aeroplane, if we omit heavy weather. But now came a further development when it was decided to build 55-ft. C.M.B.'s, which were to be used entirely independent of a parent cruiser, yet to be hauled out of the water when possible, and thus kept in the supremacy of condition. It was the success of Lieutenant W. N. T. Beckett, R.N., in his attack against German destroyers off Ostend, during the early part of 1917, which

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convinced the Admiralty of the C.M.B.'s high value. He had come out from Dunkirk with his four, gone along the coast, and off Ostend sunk one of the German destroyers, besides scoring other hits. The idea now spread widely, orders were entrusted to a number of small boat builders on the Thames and elsewhere to construct as rapidly as possible large numbers of this bigger class.

The 55-footers were, of course, better sea boats than the smaller type, and were capable of carrying either two 18-inch torpedoes or one torpedo and four depth charges. The speed was far better, over 40 knots being obtained, and the crew were increased to five, the radius of action being five hours or 200 miles. Important C.M.B. bases were now organised at Dover, Portsmouth and Portland, where you would find a miniature navy with its own dockyard, mess, slips and complete independence. Now in order to provide for each boat two officers, two motor mechanics and one wireless operator, it was not possible to spare more officers from the Harwich force, so lieutenants and sub-lieutenants, and even midshipmen, from the Royal Naval Reserve (who had formerly served in the Merchant Service) and from the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (many of whom were yachtsmen or accustomed to small boats) were now taken into this growing section.

A considerable advance had thus been made from the original idea. The light cruisers were unable to carry more than a couple of C.M.B.'s, and no serious attacks on enemy bases were ever made by the davit principle. The 55-footers were still of the tip-and-run character, unable to keep the sea beyond those few hours, and by no means comfortable for the crew. I have been to sea only once during the war in such craft, but no one can deny that if the destroyer thrills



COASTAL MOTOR BOAT
40-footer.



COASTAL MOTOR BOAT
One of the 55-footers. Speed 38 knots.

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any keen ship-lover, these tender wooden boats with their amazing energy are so little in the water as to convey the sensation almost of flying. Wide-awake vigilance on the part of the officers was the first requisite, but for the mechanics tending their twin engines of 750 combined horse-power in a cramped space with the boat leaping and crashing over the seas was about as severe a test for highly skilled engineers as you could devise. Thus, as in the Air service, the submarines, or the destroyers, there rose up quickly a corporate tradition and characteristic pride. Assuredly, no section of sea brotherhood more quickly grew in technical and courageous achievement, or expanded so readily on bold lines.

Just as the destroyer had come in to oust the torpedo-boat, so these C.M.B.'s had become harassing craft to the German destroyers, and Schulze's admission that the latter had to be kept in port off patrol is no exaggeration. Rarely enemy destroyers were able to leave the vicinity of their Belgian base, and on one of those special occasions when five fast German destroyers attempted to dash through Dover Straits, they were met on their return by our C.M.B.'s, who promptly torpedoed one of them. It is true that the enemy, in turn, replied by building a class of small craft; but their P.M.B.'s, as they were called, were more inferior to our C.M.B.'s than even their land tanks were to ours, and lacked that enthusiastic venturesome dash. I have examined details of these craft, which were based on Blankenberghe's tiny harbour, but they are hardly worthy of mention. If our C.M.B.'s were constantly fired at by the Belgian shore batteries, which were able to register direct hits, the P.M.B.'s were so slow, so tied to their base, that they were never actually seen by our boats.

If we take the period ending on 11th November 1918, we lost only thirteen C.M.B.'s, which is

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remarkable considering that some tens of thousands of miles were patrolled between Dunkirk and Zeebrugge. Only five of these were lost in action, the remainder being destroyed either through collision, accident or to avoid capture, though one ended through some cause unknown. Three C.M.B.'s were lost during that first year, 1917, but the celerity with which they were able to pick up their speed was their greatest protection. Unquestionably, they were tactically best in night attacks. On one occasion, the year 1918, our light cruisers had dropped from davits several of the 40-footers, and German aircraft were able to sink some of these motor-boats, whilst others drifted into Dutch waters. But it was in April 1918 that the C.M.B.'s gave such wonderful proofs of their successful valour in diverse ways. With their two small masts for the wireless, a miniature deck-house, and even light quick-firing guns in addition to their torpedoes, those 55-footers had become almost little ships. It was found, too, that because of their shallow draught and high speed they could go impudently into Zeebrugge, lay mines, and then come out again. All this was very disconcerting to the enemy, who never knew what to expect next.

Much has been written of that great St George's Day adventure, when Admiral Keyes set out with a numerous and mixed force to block the entrance of Zeebrugge and Ostend. Every one has heard of the glorious deeds performed by the block-ships, the motor launches, the *Vindictive*, submarines, destroyers and other craft. But sufficient appreciation of the work by the C.M.B.'s on that night of 22nd-23rd April has hardly been granted by the public, and this doubtless because so little has appeared in print. And yet their duties on that historic occasion were of prime importance, though full of gallantry. On their smoke screen (which they created by the employment of

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special chemicals in their exhaust) much depended ; but their sphere of action included entering the enemy's harbours, torpedoing and even using Stokes trench mortars for throwing bombs over the Zeebrugge Mole on to the aeroplane sheds. Nor was this all, for theirs was the task of marking positions with flares as navigational guides for the block-ships.

Now the Dover C.M.B.'s left this port on 22nd April at 3.35 p.m., and rendezvoused north of the Goodwins, where they were taken in tow about five o'clock. Unfortunately, one of these C.M.B.'s, whilst endeavouring to be taken in tow by H.M.S. *Thetis*, overran a bight of $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch manilla and thus fouled both propellers. She had therefore to be taken in tow by H.M. Drifter *Gideon*, and brought back to Dover, where she arrived at eight that night. You can imagine how grievous a disappointment this was to her people, and it was accentuated by the discovery that both rudder-post and stern-brackets were all damaged. But such was the personal driving force, such the irresistible desire to rejoin in time for the grand operations, that by 9.40 p.m. repairs had been made and this craft was launched into the water. She then went full speed across to the Belgian coast, arrived off Zeebrugge at 11.50 p.m., and began dropping her smoke floats near the shore, coming under heavy fire from a Blankenberghe battery. She had thus covered about seventy miles in under two hours, including one stop. Finally, after arriving just in time and taking part in these night operations she went into Dunkirk soon after four the following morning.

There were altogether seventeen C.M.B.'s engaged off Zeebrugge on this occasion, which, after having been towed across, slipped their ropes and began as individuals in one mighty brotherhood to carry out definite apportioned service. Thus, at the planned

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time of the clock, there they arrived ahead of the great Armada, made smoke waves across the latter's approach, and from Zeebrugge to Blankenberghe, as well as east of Zeebrugge ; whilst one of them went within fifty yards along the Mole, firing her Stokes guns until she reached the outer end of the viaduct. Another C.M.B. concentrated fire on the seaplane sheds, a second attacked the wharf of the Mole, whilst two more laid smoke screens athwart the Mole battery so as to assist the *Vindictive* in coming alongside. Another pair had been detailed to fire torpedoes inside the Mole after escorting in the three block-ships.

But there was a splendid bit of work performed that night by two of the 40-footers, numbered respectively 7 and 5. Their orders were that seventy minutes after passing a certain position they were to proceed through the darkness at full speed, get right up to Zeebrugge entrance and torpedo any enemy torpedo craft which would be secured inside. These two C.M.B.'s were then to turn to port and make their exit to the east. In obedience to these orders they proceeded like two nocturnal phantoms, and at 11.52 p.m. sighted the Mole. Number 7 passed close to the lighthouse, got right up to the harbour boom, and by the light of the enemy's star shells followed it until an opening was seen close to the shore. It was tricky, exciting work, full of breathless suspense, had this boat not been far too busy trying to find a hole in the enemy's protection. It was just then that a German destroyer was observed silhouetted up as she lay secured to the Mole about five hundred yards inside this net boom defence, which had been intentionally laid to counteract the annoying nightly visitations of these C.M.B.'s. Number 7 now saw her chance, wasted not a moment, fired her torpedo at that close range, and had the gratification of knowing that the enemy was hit in line with the forebridge.

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It was then time to get away more quickly than the the quickest. The boom was located again, but there was a heavy rain of machine-gun fire, so this motor-boat was coming out of the harbour at twenty knots when when she collided with a large buoy. You can imagine the effect on a light craft with such velocity, and, of course, her starboard bow was severely injured. Her captain, Sub-Lieutenant L. R. Blake, R.N.R., therefore increased speed to thirty-two knots, so as to lift the damaged hull forward well clear of the water. He managed to get well away from the harbour, but at 2.15 a.m. she was leaking so badly that she had to be taken in tow by H.M.S. *Tetrach*, a destroyer, and thus reached Dover after an excellent night's venture. Her sister ship, Number 5, commanded by Sub-Lieutenant C. Outhwaite, R.N.V.R., on reaching the Mole, just before midnight, had sighted a German destroyer steaming to the E.N.E. at twelve knots. The latter, observed this C.M.B., switched on her foremost searchlight and opened fire. But at five minutes past midnight Outhwaite fired his torpedo at 650 yards and struck the enemy just below that searchlight. Then, escaping from heavy fire concentrated by the destroyer and the end of the Mole (with its $3\frac{1}{2}$ and 6-inch guns), this motor-boat spent the rest of the time filling the gaps along the smoke screen line, and finally reached Dunkirk safely at 3.40 a.m.

Looking back on these incidents, performed by intrepid temporary naval officers, one, at least, of whom had still to complete his academic education, the affair reads more like a boy's book of fiction than a piece of actual history. It may be a very long time before ever the youth of England get such a wonderful chance of exhibiting the qualities handed down from our sea ancestors ; but this spirit must never be allowed to die, and everything that can keep it alive by appeal

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to the imagination and intellect should receive the fullest encouragement. There is hardly a young man to-day who does not think with big envy of those motor-boat achievements whenever the junior brotherhood's exploits are mentioned ; and surely there are certain stages in the train of the world's events when youth has acknowledged itself lucky to be of that generation. Those who were of the right age to sail with Columbus, to go round the world with Drake, to race in the clipper-ships, to have done big things under the white ensign during the Great War—these are in the grand parade of which eternal young manhood may well be proud.

On the same night as the attack on Zeebrugge, the further undertaking a little further down the coast against Ostend was less successful. The central section off that port had its smoke screen made by C.M.B.'s, a table having been carefully worked out giving the positions where the smoke was to be laid according to the wind's direction. But two causes prevented complete and essential success : for there was a sharp, thin difference between failure and attainment. Firstly, at 11.40 p.m., just at the wrong time the wind shifted, so that it was impossible to screen the channel from the Stroombank buoy to the piers. C.M.B. No. 19 had laid her calcium buoys near the Stroombank about eleven o'clock, after the first smoke screen was well under way. She approached Ostend piers at twenty knots, was picked up by the searchlights, and came under very heavy fire. She succeeded, however, in laying her calcium buoys close to the entrance, and then went astern into the cover of her own smoke ; but no sooner had these buoys for guiding the block-ships lit up than the enemy's shells sank them. Thus, after passing the Stroombank buoy, the two block-ships missed the harbour entrance and got aground beyond.

But that was not the end of the effort, for on 5th

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May the destroyer *Meteor*, accompanied by three 55-ft. C.M.B.'s and two of the 40-footers, left Dunkirk before half-past ten that night and arrived off Ostend. The bigger C.M.B.'s were armed with torpedoes and depth charges ready to take on enemy patrol craft or submarine, whilst the smaller boats were to make a smoke screen covering the operation of *Meteor*. In spite of the fact that the enemy fired star shells at frequent intervals, *Meteor* was able to lay a line of mines off the port which were specially devised so that they would sink to the bottom about mid-day on 8th May, and thus prevent egress until approximately that time. It is indicative of the enemy's fear of our mosquito craft that not a single patrol was encountered, so that all six craft accomplished their work and returned safely.

Incidentally, there is an interesting secret about these mines which has since been revealed by a scientist at one of our universities. The Admiralty had asked for a shackle which would stand a pull of one ton, yet melt after being immersed in the water for a certain period. This was a novel request for any scientific or engineering mind, and the object aimed at was the reverse of what *Meteor* had accomplished. The Admiralty required a contrivance which, whilst shackling mine to sinker on the bed of the sea until the mine-laying craft had got well clear, would none the less allow the mine to rise free to its proper depth-setting after elapse of time. This problem was solved by the simple process of pouring melted toffee into a cavity dovetailed in a metal shackle, so that a strain of one and a third tons could be sustained during the forty-five minutes which the sugar required to melt.

Now, after that first attempt had failed to block Ostend, it was decided to make another effort at the first possible opportunity, and *Vindictive* was selected.

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Within four days she had been repaired and a couple of hundred tons of cement put into her, even the soldiers of the Dover garrison assisting by filling the bags with cement. But northerly winds and rough seas prevented postponement of the second attempt until the second week in May. The night of 9th-10th May came as the first suitable opportunity, for there needed to be a perfect conjunction of darkness and tide. In the meanwhile, the enemy had removed all buoys off Ostend, as we learnt by air reconnaissance. It was therefore arranged that a special calcic-phosphide light buoy should be laid from which the block-ship could take her departure straight into Ostend between the piers, and around which the smoke screens could be made.

It was expected that the enemy would show a little more initiative to-night, for that Zeebrugge show, as we afterwards learned, had struck alarm into the enemy from their Emperor down to the lowest rating on the Mole. Many destroyers were therefore sent from Germany to strengthen the Zeebrugge force, and late on this May evening nine enemy destroyers were seen in the offing. It was for this reason that Admiral Keyes in the *Warwick*, together with three other of our destroyers, cruised midway between Ostend and Zeebrugge, whilst Commodore Lynes, in the flotilla-leader *Faulknor*, led the off-shore supports. I mention these details so that one may appreciate the conditions for this final effort. At 1.30 a.m. the advanced forces, consisting of C.M.B.'s and motor launches from Dunkirk, were sent inshore and began their smoke screens. It was a dark night, with no moon, but a low-lying sea-fog here and there in patches. Everything was going well, the smoke screen and weather conditions were perfect, the *Vindictive* came steaming along at twelve knots, leaving the boat that marked the position of the

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Stroombank buoy close to port. Escorted by C.M.B.'s she had a little difficulty at first in finding the harbour entrance owing to the fog and smoke, which were so effective that she could not see more than three hundred yards ahead. But then she gave the "last resort" signal to her C.M.B. escort, when forthwith a huge million-power candle flare was lit up on the water by C.M.B. No. 23. *Vindictive* then sighted the pier heads on the port beam and simultaneously came under a very heavy fire from every kind of shore battery. What followed is now too well known to need repetition, but, as Commodore Lynes afterwards reported, to the C.M.B.'s and the M.L.'s belonged the chief honour of having guided *Vindictive* in between those piers. Any one who has navigated up and down here knows the strong tide which pours across Ostend and through the open piers. Fog screens were essential for covering our vessels that night, but the absence of proper lights and peaceful conditions did not make matters any the easier.

C.M.B. No. 25, with the obedient gallantry of these little boats, escorted and protected *Vindictive* with a smoke screen right up to the entrance, where she assisted still further with her Very's guiding lights for the big ship to approach. Before the war, who would ever have thought that little motor craft could escort cruisers? Who could have expected that a thinly-built improved racing type of boat could become of such prime fighting value? It was surely the age for unhesitating young brotherhood with their fresh ideas. For now, having successfully piloted in *Vindictive*, No. 25 promptly torpedoed the piers, and then with good effect engaged with her own machine-gun the enemy's quick-firers. And so it was with the other good little boats. No. 26 had also been escorting *Vindictive*, and then ran ahead to torpedo one of the piers so as to put out of action

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enemy guns on the top. Now the water here is shallow and the range was necessarily short, the torpedo exploded somehow quite close to the boat's stern, and shook her so heartily that her engines were damaged and her seams opened, lifting her from the sea a good number of feet before depositing her again with a crash.

But it is a remarkable tribute to the strength of these apparently frail craft that, although the after part of the hull was permanently deformed, it was not fractured. Many of the intricate pipe connections were broken, all hands were thoroughly shaken, yet they managed to stop the leak which was causing her to sink ; and, what is more, they were able to take her out of that hellish zone of fire and pick up another vessel of the off-shore patrol, who brought her safely in tow all the way across to Dover. So also No. 24, besides torpedoing the pier ends, maintained an efficient smoke screen inshore throughout the remainder of the operations. As for No. 22, she, whilst smoke-screening the shore batteries, encountered suddenly a German destroyer, who promptly switched on searchlight and opened fire. The C.M.B., therefore, with only her Lewis guns, fought so tenaciously and peppered the destroyer so effectively as to drive the enemy away from the pier entrance, where she would have thwarted *Vindictive's* blocking action. It is significant, too, that all these little craft so paralysed several other German destroyers, which were lying close under the protection of shore batteries, that the latter never ventured out.

In this climax of their efforts, then, and by such splendid co-operation, the youngest sea brotherhood had made tremendous history. Their high speed and small size doubtless had much to do with their ability to come through alive ; but especially must we give praise to their highly efficient handling, both as individual units and under the general leadership of

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Lieutenant A. E. P. Welman, R.N. It would be difficult to imagine more hazardous undertakings, and, if it is remarkable that all boats came out of that inferno, they were much battered, with officers and men wounded.

Boats of dimensions similar to our C.M.B.'s, but of inferior speed, were used by the Italian navy in the Adriatic during the war, and there were three brilliant achievements. In December 1917 Commander Rizzo took a small torpedo motor-boat into Trieste, in spite of batteries, minefields and boom defence, and there torpedoed and sank the Austrian battleship *Wien*, a comparatively small vessel of 5600 tons. The alarm was raised, a hot fire was begun, but Rizzo managed to get right away. In the following May, Commander Pellegrini, also in a fast motor-boat, with heroic coolness and determination set out to perform an even bigger feat at Pola. Only a plucky optimist could ever have undertaken such an enormous job; for that Trieste incident had put the Austrians into a state of extra vigilance, and a double boom had been laid. But with dogged determination, Pellegrini worked his way inside the boom, and at close range torpedoed the 20,000-ton battleship *Viribus Unitis*. It is true that he was unable to escape, but not before he had sent up a couple of rockets to inform his comrades outside that he had succeeded. And then, on 10th June 1918, Rizzo made the most audacious effort of all. He was under way just before dawn with two of these small motor torpedo-boats near the Dalmatian coast, when he sighted a couple of Austrian "Dreadnoughts" escorted by ten destroyers.

Each of these two Italian boats carried a couple of torpedoes as well as depth charges, so he decided to make straight for the enemy and get inside the destroyer screen. These tactics are well worthy to be compared

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with the daring of our destroyers at Jutland. Reducing speed so as to lessen the sound of his engines and the conspicuousness of the wash, Rizzo had already passed ahead of the third destroyer when he was discovered and the alarm was audibly given. He was now right in the thick of fast shipping, and likely to be blown out of the water or rammed any moment. Did he hesitate? If he had so done, he would most certainly have ended his dashing career precisely then. But ignoring all else he accelerated speed, made for the leading battleship, and when she was only two hundred yards away on his beam, loosed off both torpedoes. The first got home below and between the two funnels—a beautiful shot—whilst the second torpedo hit further astern. The second motor-boat fired at the second battleship, her first torpedo missing, though the second was a hit.

This really brilliant performance sent the Austrians into a state of irresponsible fury. There were destroyers dashing about trying to ram and firing wildly, though it made matters no better for the two motor-boats, who were in grave risk of being sunk now, if ever. But Rizzo again did the cool act by dropping a depth charge immediately ahead of a destroyer racing onward, and so blew her fore part away. This saved the situation, the enemy gave up the chase, Rizzo and his other boat escaped at high speed, and the incident ended. Two out of Austria's four biggest ships, including the *Szent Istvan*, or rather three, if we include *Viribus Unitis*, had been torpedoed, and by the frailest of boats. Thus the main naval strength of Austria-Hungary had been wiped out. It would be easy to exaggerate the lessons which suggest themselves, and it would be mere stupidity to infer from these successes that the battleship is dead as regards the manner of future sea warfare. That would be to fall into that *Jeune École* heresy of the French, who learned all too late that many small torpedo-



BRITISH COASTAL MOTOR BOAT ASHORE
German officers inspecting the craft injured off the Belgian coast.

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craft can never take the place of the big capital ship, able to take her place in the line and fire the heaviest guns.

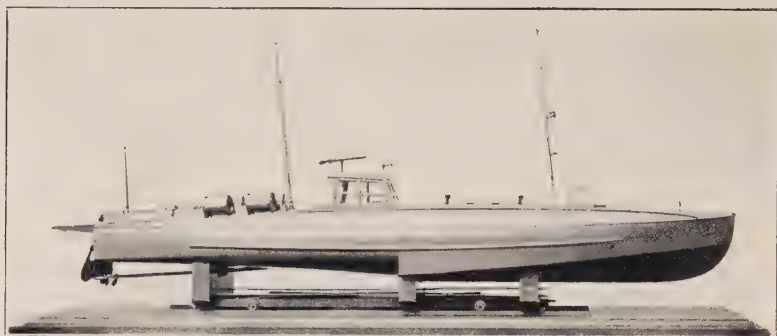
Zeebrugge and Ostend had, however, proved that light mosquito craft could be of immense importance under ideal conditions. These conditions demand primarily either darkness or fog—natural or artificial—unless the enemy's vigilance is bad; and unquestionably the Austrians were keeping a poor lookout when cruising. Secondly, the C.M.B. is at her best also when the target is stationary or nearly so. Thus, attacks on harbours or slow-moving patrols are essentially the work for these special craft, and they possess by their lightness and ease of transportation the virtue of great mobility, making it possible thus to carry sea-power even to some inland lake if necessary. I have shown in another volume how a couple of 40-ft. twin-screw Thames pleasure motor-boats, long before the C.M.B.'s ever were designed, were carried out from England to South Africa and then drawn many hundred miles by locomotive or traction-engine to Lake Tanganyika, where, after a splendid little battle, they were able to win supremacy by "sea" at the end of the year 1915.

Now the largest inland sheet of water in the world is the Caspian Sea with its 760 miles length. In July of 1918 it was decided that control must be obtained over the ships which used that great lake to deny sea-power and sea-transport to others, and obtain sea-power ourselves. This was no easy problem, but British naval personnel were sent overland with guns from the Tigris, Caspian commercial shipping was obtained, the guns mounted, and thus an improvised gunboat flotilla was commissioned. The Armistice of the following November did not end hostilities against the Bolsheviks, and with the opening of the Dardanelles

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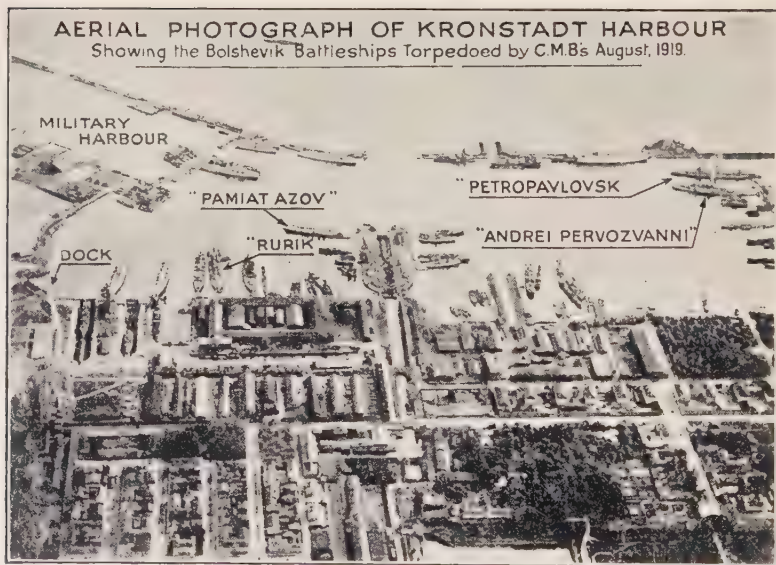
it was decided to send six C.B.M.'s to Batum, at the eastern end of the Black Sea, together with a further six. From Batum they were carried by train for six hundred miles to Baku on the Caspian, where a couple of steamers were fitted up for them as transport on the same general principle as the Navy uses seaplane carriers. We have here, then, a return to the original idea for the intended use of these C.M.B.'s. The nett result was that in spite of exceptional difficulties, such as hardly being able to recognise friend from foe, the trying weather and short choppy sea, which was least suitable for these craft, the C.M.B.'s did succeed in causing the surrender of vessels without the necessity of firing torpedoes : for the exploding of a depth charge sufficiently near had the right moral effect. Eventually, the Bolshevik Fleet retired up the River Volga, and, the Caspian having been cleared, the C.M.B.'s were handed over to the friendly Russians and our personnel sent home.

From the south of Europe we pass to see how this new mobility was able to operate in the extreme north, both on the Archangel front and in the Baltic, where the young brotherhood were to cover themselves with great glory. It was a flotilla of 55-footers which were sent to the former, with the intention of using them in the advance up the Dvina River, H.M.S. *Hyderabad* (a shallow steamer built late in the war as a Q-ship) being utilised as their depot. The boats would not require torpedoes, but they were given bullet-proof protection ; their speed, light draught and armament of six Lewis guns making them invaluable little ships for supporting up the shallow river the land forces' advance. But, as every one knows, the land force did not make progress and the expedition had to be recalled. Although the C.M.B.'s never got their opportunity, they did considerable amount of valuable



COASTAL MOTOR BOAT

Model of a 55-footer, shewing guns and depth charges.



KRONSTADT HARBOUR

Showing objectives to be attacked by the Coastal Motor Boats.

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and varied work, including running many miles and being the last vessels to retire.

But the Baltic campaign afforded just those chances of attack for which these motor-boats are so excellently suitable, and they were able to bring about results which for brilliant daring and heroic courage are at least the equal of anything that was performed off the Belgian coast. Although the Archangel operations failed to culminate in a combined land advance on Petrograd, a British naval squadron, including light cruisers and destroyers under Rear-Admiral Sir Walter Cowan, was based on Biorko as a blockading force to prevent the Bolshevik Northern Fleet from coming out of Petrograd Bay. The Admiralty had decided to send out from England eight C.M.B.'s to serve under Admiral Cowan, and the senior officer in charge was that Commander C. C. Dobson whom in an earlier chapter we saw in command of H.M. submarine C-27 when she co-operated with H.M. trawler *Princess Louise* and sank the German U-boat 23 in June 1915. This officer had since been promoted, and presently he was to win further distinction in a small vessel.

Since the Armistice of 1918 those skilled motor mechanics who had contributed so much to the good running of the C.M.B.'s had completed their naval service and gone back to civil life ; nor were there enough suitable artificers and stokers in the Royal Navy to take their place. The result was that again volunteers had to be obtained "from the beach." But before this octet of 55-footers was sent out there had been an amazing attack by Lieutenant A. W. S. Agar, R.N., in his 40-footer. At the eastern end of the Gulf of Finland lies Petrograd Bay, with Kronstadt naval harbour and base a few miles short of Petrograd itself. It was in June 1919 that,

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entirely on his own initiative and totally unsupported, Lieutenant Agar took his boat into Petrograd Bay, motored through the darkness, arrived off Kronstadt harbour at dawn, and there found, as expected, the Bolshevik three-funnelled cruiser *Oleg*, a vessel of 6650 tons, armed with twelve 6-inch and smaller guns, as well as torpedoes. She was lying at anchor acting as guardship just outside the harbour entrance, with a protective screen of four Bolshevik destroyers beyond. These four Agar managed to elude, and then quickly firing a torpedo at short range, he had the satisfaction of seeing it hit *Oleg* in a vital place; an explosion followed and the cruiser immediately sank. Agar and his boat got safely back, and this admirable deed, for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross, showed convincingly that the attacks on Zeebrugge and Ostend were no isolated possibilities.

On the contrary, it was realised that what had been performed by one 40-footer might be done even more extensively by eight boats. The plan now was no less than to send these craft right into Kronstadt harbour itself and there torpedo the enemy's battle-ships. No more risky proceeding could be asked of such craft, and for destroyers or bigger vessels the attempt would have been ridiculous. Thus these almost toy boats had opened up entirely new possibilities. But photographs taken by our aeroplanes showed that since Agar's successful attack the enemy had not dared to risk leaving any guard outside the harbour other than one destroyer. From these photographs, however, taken on the day preceding the second intended attack, it was possible to see just where the Bolshevik Fleet were moored. Thus on entering through the opening there was the submarine depot ship *Pamiat Azov* almost opposite, with the 15,000-ton armoured cruiser *Rurik* a little further to starboard;

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whilst, if you turned sharp to port on entering, there was the new 23,300-ton battle-cruiser *Petropavlovsk*, and next to her the 17,400-ton battleship *Andrei Pervozvanni*. Besides these important units there were a number of other valuable ships.

At ten o'clock on the night of 17th August the eight C.M.B.'s shoved off from H.M.S. *Vindictive* (the newly-built successor to her namesake which had immolated herself at Ostend), that had been acting as their tender, and began their long journey from Biorko towards Kronstadt on an adventure that will ever be remembered as long as naval history is read. Commander Dobson was in charge and went in C.M.B. 31-BD, whose captain was Lieutenant R. H. MacBean, R.N. The next senior officer was Lieut.-Commander F. T. Brade, R.N.R., in 62-BD. Lieutenant Agar was in No. 4, Lieutenant Bremner, R.N. (whom we have seen as one of that original trio who inaugurated the C.M.B. idea), was in 79-A, Lieutenant L. E. S. Napier, R.N., was in 24-A, Lieutenant A. Dayrell-Reed, R.N., was in 88-BD, Acting Sub-Lieutenant E. R. Bodley, R.N.R., was in 72-A and Acting Sub-Lieutenant F. Howard, R.N.R., was in 86-BD.

As at the second attack on Ostend, the night was ideal, with a flat calm and very dark. As part of the operations it was arranged for an aerial bombardment to synchronise with the C.M.B.s' attack. Starting out from Biorko at eighteen knots, some of the boats with Lieutenant Agar missed the others in the dark, but the general course was to sweep round the north and east of the island to Kronstadt harbour entrance on the south. In accordance with the plan the first to enter the harbour was Lieutenant Bremner in 79-A, and there was no one in the service who had more strenuous and perilous experience of C.M.B. warfare than this pioneer officer. Taking his boat straight

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across the harbour, after the aerial bombardment had started to distract the enemy, and going direct for his target, he torpedoed the *Pamiat Azov*. This being done, he quickly altered his helm and came right out. But this boat had paid the price of victory, for she was disabled, and Bremner himself was wounded in eleven places. It was something that he had brought his ruined boat out of the enemy's stronghold, and then he had to blow her up, being afterwards rescued by the Bolsheviks and taken prisoner.

Next in order followed 31-BD with Lieutenant MacBean and Commander Dobson on board. This craft entered almost parallel with the starboard hand pier, went across to the port side of the harbour, torpedoed the *Andrei Pervozvanni*, and then starboarding her helm came out on a course similar to that by which she had gone in, receiving a galling fire from the forts. Following immediately astern of this boat operated Lieutenant Dayrell-Reed in 88-BD. This was a type of gallant officer whom one met over and over again during the war in mine-sweepers, destroyers and submarines. He had begun his career in a sailing ship, and by the early part of the war he had left the Merchant Service to serve in the Royal Naval Reserve as navigator in one of the Harwich submarines, from where he joined the C.M.B. section. He had been transferred to the Royal Navy, had taken part in that first C.M.B. action at Zeebrugge, and, whether as a seaman or a warrior, here was the genuine dyed-in-the-wool sailor, fearless and gallant in the grand tradition of the great Elizabethans, an ideal specimen of what the sea's brotherhood denotes.

The duty imposed on this 88-BD was to torpedo the *Petropavlovsk*, but if the *Andrei Pervozvanni* were to be in the way and prevent a shot, Dayrell-Reed was to fire at the latter. With him in his boat was Lieutenant

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Steele, who had served with the Grand Fleet in the *Royal Oak*. Most unfortunately, just as 88-BD was passing into the harbour, Dayrell-Reed was shot through the head and killed. Not merely did it mean the loss of a brave personality, but it had occurred at the most critical moment. With the utmost promptness Steele took over the command when it was all a matter of seconds and immediate action. He then carried on exactly as arranged, and torpedoed not merely *Andrei Pervozvanni*, but *Petropavlovsk* as well, a most wonderful instance of gallantry and efficiency; and even brought his boat out alive by the same way that he went in.

C.M.B. 72-A had been with the first three boats. She should have entered the harbour and torpedoed the dock gates, but fell on misfortune. Whilst passing through the batteries outside a bullet hit her carburettor, so that she dropped astern. She was approaching the entrance, sighted a destroyer and fired; but the torpedo failed to run, inasmuch as the firing gear had been shot through. About this time arrived on the scene Lieutenant Agar with the other boats. We have now to account for Nos. 4, 62-BD, 24-A and 86-BD. Brade, in 62-BD, entered in a manner similar to 31 and 88-BD; but, whilst rushing onward at high speed, received a disabling hit just as he got inside. He then swung round on starboard helm, managed to get well out of the harbour once more and then saw a destroyer, which he forthwith torpedoed; but 62-BD was in turn assailed, so that she sank by gunfire, with the loss of Brade—another of those brave officers which the British Mercantile Marine had produced. No. 86-BD was further unfortunate, for she should have entered the harbour and torpedoed the *Rurik*, but the motor-boat's big-end seized up and she lay disabled outside the forts. To her assistance went

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72-A, who, having been rendered useless as a fighting machine, took her in tow and so brought her back to Biorko. Outside the harbour there had remained Agar in No. 4 and Napier in 24-A. These were able to carry out their portion of the plan, though not without loss. The latter torpedoed, as intended, a destroyer-leader anchored outside as guard ship, but the boat was in turn sunk, Napier being taken prisoner.

Agar was hovering about ready to torpedo any enemy vessel that might come forth from the harbour, prepared also to render aid to any C.M.B. or its crew. Long after the others had darted into distance on their way back to Biorko did this No. 4 wait perilously about looking for Bremner's and Brade's and Napier's craft until it was daylight ; and then firing a torpedo, which struck a transport in the military harbour, he too began his trip back home. If we reckon the night's work of these brave little boats in terms of material loss and gain, we see that at the cost of three tiny craft the enemy had been robbed of two of their biggest capital ships, quite apart from other units. But as a moral victory this Kronstadt episode will always be reckoned higher still. Well schemed and perfectly carried out, affected by no more than average bad luck, there is no better chapter in naval history where the younger brethren of the sea have co-operated with such heroism and total disregard of danger. In the old sailing-ship days cutting-out expeditions demanded raw courage and brute force ; but here in this most modern affair good seamanship, strict navigation, practical engineering skill and technical professional ability were absolutely requisite additional to a willing self-sacrifice. For the long run out and home could never have been performed otherwise, nor could torpedoes have hit their target amidst tensest excitement.

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Altogether four officers and three men were killed, whilst others were wounded and prisoners. A number of decorations were awarded, including the Victoria Cross to Commander Dobson and Lieutenant Steele. When you consider the powerful searchlight beams and the heavy fire all concentrated on these thin wooden boats, the wonder is not that any were lost, but that any should have come out with hull, engines and crews intact ; and it may be long years before young officers in little boats ever have such a chance of exhibiting to the world what can be done by stout hearts and vigorous bodies.

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PART IV

THE BROTHERHOOD OF GREAT
WATERS

CHAPTER IX

LITTLE SHIPS AND GOOD DEEDS

BEFORE the war two of the finest ocean-sailing ships in the world were the *Potosi* and *Preussen*, which used to voyage between Hamburg and Peru with the regularity almost of a liner. These vessels were run under strict discipline and well handled, careful regard being had to obtaining the best possible speed. They were both five-masted and extremely handsome to behold. The *Preussen* was at the time the largest ship under sail, measuring 407.8 ft. long, 53.6 ft. in beam, 27.1 ft. deep and of 5081 British registered tons. She had been built of steel at Geestemünde in the year 1902.

Now on Saturday night of November the 5th, 1910, *Preussen* was on her way down the English Channel, bound out to South America, when she sighted on the starboard side the lights of the Newhaven-Dieppe mail steamer *Brighton*. Presently a shout was heard from the steamer, and by some error of judgment there followed a collision which caused damage to the *Preussen's* jib-boom and fore-rigging ; and, as her hull was found to be injured so that she was leaking badly, she came round and ran back up Channel, anchoring under Dungeness, where she let go both anchors.

This is anything but an ideal spot for real shelter, but the nearest port to leeward is Dover, which is a most difficult entrance for sailing ships ; and a captain does not want to increase his owners' expenses by unnecessary harbour dues. All that night and the next morning the men were at the pumps trying to

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control the leak, but, unfortunately, it came on to blow one of the worst autumn gales that had for many years raged off the south coast. Such a vessel as *Preussen* with all her yards and her tall masts, rigging and hull caused considerable windage ; the sea got up, she was tugging and straining at her anchors so violently that eventually in this terrible gale no links could endure. First snapped the starboard cable, and then the port parted, so that she was driven out of the bay and went along before the south-wester.

There are always powerful tugs ready with steam up to leave Dover, but no tug could hold *Preussen* and persuade her into harbour against such force of wind, and at five that Sunday night, utterly helpless, she drove ashore a little to the east of Dover, in Crab Bay, four hours after high water, striking the rocks violently. Her master, Captain Nissen, was both a fine seaman and had plenty of pluck. Through his excellent leadership all hands were resolved to stick by the *Preussen* as long as there was any chance of getting her afloat, but really she was doomed from the very moment when the tugs had found it impossible to hold her. That Sunday night was a dreadful experience as the wind with a touch of south in it screeched through the steel stays and threw the seas over her, wetting every man all the time. The steel foremast had come down with a terrible clatter without warning, and it was marvellous that men working forward at the time were not killed.

The Dover lifeboat went out under Coxswain Brockman, but it was blowing almost hurricane force, and, owing to the heavy seas, it was impossible to get alongside the *Preussen*. About midnight distress rockets were fired from the ship, so Brockman mustered his men and went out again under sail. For some hours the weather was still so bad that after signalling his

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presence he had to stand off, owing to the danger of being swept against her by the vicious squalls. At last, however, he got sufficiently near to receive Captain Nissen's request that he should assist in taking out hawsers to the four tugs, *Lady Curzon*, *Lady Vita*, *John Bull* and *Albatross*, which were also standing by.

Finally, after great difficulty, Brockman succeeded, and then offered to make the attempt of rescuing the crew, but this was declined, and at 5 p.m., after many exhausting hours, the lifeboat went back into Dover, but not for much rest, for by 9 p.m. she came out again, and by this time there was quite a flotilla of British, Belgian, German and Dutch tugs. Besides the four mentioned there had arrived the *Nubia*, *Aid*, *Vincia*, *Sabia*, *Dorien*, *Sun II.*, *Sun III.* and the *President De Leeuw*. Twelve splendid little vessels, all resolved to save that sailing ship if they possibly could! But their efforts were without avail, and she was in an impossible position with ten feet of water in her holds, and badly punctured by the rocks.

At high water the seas were coming over the *Preussen* like great cascades, as the crew of about forty stood huddled together under the lee of the midship deck-house, wearing cork jackets, soaked and shivering in that bleak November wind. For an hour before high water those dozen tugs were backing and filling in a further attempt to get hawsers aboard, but there was such an atrocious sea breaking that it was most dangerous for any craft to get near enough to the stricken ship. About two o'clock all skippers, realising the impossibility of such a task, abandoned their efforts, and the twelve tugs steamed into Dover, *Lady Vita* towing back the lifeboat, every craft being swept by waves as they returned. It was through no lack of trying that this international flotilla, containing some of the most experienced tugmasters in the world, had

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failed ; and before giving up the job, *Lady Vita* had even tried to get the lifeboat alongside between *Preussen* and the shore. The forces of nature had beaten ships and men.

In the meanwhile, the coastguards on the Sunday night had been doing their utmost from the shore under difficult circumstances. Realising that the best position from which to work the rocket apparatus was from the foot of the cliffs, Chief Officer Bernard found that it was impossible to take a cart along the beach, so the lighter apparatus from the eastern arm of Dover breakwater was carried in sections ; and after making their way along the shore and wading out so that the men were knee-deep in the sea, his party fired the first rocket, which successfully reached the *Preussen*. And then a most surprising thing happened, for now there arrived unexpectedly from the top of that high cliff Coastguard Hughes, who had with splendid nerve and courage made his descent by means of a cliff-ladder. Thus, by the time Bernard's crew had to abandon their beach work owing to the rising tide, it was possible to secure the line brought down from the cliff to the line Bernard had fired to the *Preussen*. This could be used to rescue the German people if their ship were to break up, though it would be a hair-raising experience to be hauled up that dizzy height.

Unfortunately, since she first got ashore, this ship had been shifted still further eastward by the mad gale on to a spot where the rocks were still worse. Here she was held fast in a grip that was never to be relaxed ; no power on sea or land could ever haul her away now. On Tuesday the gale had moderated. A Dover galley went out and brought ashore a German doctor, as well as a marine artist, who were two passengers proceeding to Valparaiso. During the afternoon the *Lady Vita* towed a lighter alongside and took

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eighteen of *Preussen's* crew into Dover, where they were housed in the Sailors' Home. Before this incident, there had arrived in Dover a telegram from the Kaiser, and this had been taken aboard the *Preussen* by one of the tugs. Captain Nissen had then mustered his crew on deck, read the imperial message, which expressed regret at the *Preussen's* loss and included an expression of high appreciation and admiration for the gallantry displayed by the crew. Nissen then called for three cheers for the Emperor William, and the shouts of the men could be heard echoing from the cliffs. But, finally, captain and remaining members of the ship's company had to leave, and four years later, whilst this wreck still showed itself, Dover Straits were visited by hostile German submarines, and some time afterwards both German destroyers and German submarines shelled Dover harbour. *Preussen* had come with a cargo of German pianos, railway metals, bricks and even crockery intended for South American civilisation ; but the later visitations were to bring torpedoes which sank or paralysed our shipping, mines which blew steamers to destruction, bursting shells which killed men and sank our vessels.

During the war there was a special duty for the tugs round our coasts. There are few craft which have such a romantic story and about which so little is heard as these stout, stubby little ships. They require very skilled captains for their especial job in towing great liners and nudging heavy tonnage into dock. If you have ever tried it, you will know there is a very great art in manœuvring these little steamers so as to break neither tow-rope nor steel-plates ; and there is nothing more awkward to handle than a vessel out of control. Even a 4000-ton tramp, damaged by collision, badly holed at the bows and down by the head, yawing about and threatening to snap the tow-rope in

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the finest weather, can make the tugmaster's job one long trial of patient endurance. But during the war, when any patrol craft were suddenly called upon to tow injured shipping to the nearest harbour, and the weather got bad and the tides were strong, and the shore lights had been put out, there was a heavy strain on captain and men.

It was quite impossible for the patrols to be here, there and everywhere at the same time, but they were intentionally scattered so that they covered the widest possible area and were able to concentrate if occasion should demand. We had an instance of this on the 26th April 1917. It was a beautiful sunlit morning, which lives in one's mind as one of those days when the sea sparkled and everything was bright and attractive. In such weather patrolling was no more irksome than yachting in peace time, but of course that is always just the occasion when something is likely to happen. This was the month when enemy submarines were at the peak of their success, and it was going to be a question as to whether Germany would be able to starve us out by sinking every merchant ship or whether we could afford the latter adequate protection. It was obvious that not every steamer could be escorted ; and eventually it was the convoy system, comprising the most important vessels, which overcame the difficulty. In the meantime, however, individual steamships could be escorted when practicable by patrol craft through such risky zones as in the neighbourhood of the Fastnet—a most favourite vicinity for the submarine, since so many liners and freighters had to pass by here between America and England.

At ten minutes past seven that morning I had picked up, whilst on my patrol, an oil-tanker off Brow Head and escorted her zigzagging past the Fastnet, round



ONE OF THE "FLOWER"-CLASS SLOOPS
(See page 95)
(Imperial War Museum photograph. Copyright reserved.)



ADMIRALTY RESCUE TUG
(See page 197)
(Imperial War Museum photograph. Copyright reserved.)



KETCH "HOPEFUL"
Setting out from Littlehampton.
(See page 218)

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Cape Clear and along the coast by Baltimore to the extent of my own area, when I left her about nine o'clock and she steamed on her voyage towards England. During the next hour and a half I was patrolling and examining the Baltimore fishing fleet (which, by reason of their pronounced Sinn Fein sympathies, were under grave suspicion at headquarters) when an east-bound collier semaphored me, "Do you know that there is a steamer being attacked by something off Brow Head?"

One second later I pulled the engine-room telegraphs over to full speed, and we went off at an average of fifteen knots to cover the intervening twenty-two miles, signalling the Fastnet lighthouse on the way. At noon we could see no ship on the sea but one steamer, and then I realised that she was apparently making no headway. This was her, right enough, but there seemed to be no submarine, and no boats in the water or any sign of human activity. But as soon as we came up we could see that she had been through a pretty tough adventure. Every boat had apparently been lowered, and there were the empty davits. She had been shelled mercilessly, she was in a sinking condition and already low in the water, so that on going alongside I was able to step straight on to her deck. And then a strange, weird spirit somehow suggested itself. I found the officers' cabins with the sea making that lonely swishing noise over the floor, gurgling about as if over a half-tide rock. It was no use shouting and calling any more, for there was obviously not a soul in the ship and progress was stopped by the water. Outside on deck were splinters of shells, and then she gave a dull, heavy lurch.

Just at this time there arrived H.M.S. *Snowdrop* (Lieut.-Commander G. Sherston, R.N.), another steamer resembling a tramp (but in reality one of

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those mystery Q-ships, and in this case commanded by a gallant retired admiral), and there joined us also an armed trawler. *Snowdrop* had been in Berehaven coaling when the signal came, "Submarine outside Bantry Bay sinking a liner. Can you proceed at once and investigate?" This was at 9.25 a.m. Seventeen minutes later *Snowdrop* had slipped from her collier and proceeded with all despatch, her gun-crews' faces still covered with coal-dust. The Q-ship had got her news by wireless, but this concentration of craft from the south, the north and north-west must have frightened away the submarine, for we never saw her, and the Q-ship after steaming round at high speed soon went back into the Atlantic on her duty.

There remained a most interesting little matter to be dealt with. We were all hoping that the U-boat might return in expectation of finishing the job we had interrupted, and Brow Head signal station would have witnessed an interesting fight; but the gun-crews had nothing to do but be bored. First of all what had happened to the survivors? There was some wreckage floating about, and I expected to find one or two men clinging to a baulk of timber—that, in fact, was her cargo—or there might be a corpse; but after examining everything, there was still no human sign. I then ran down to the Brow Head signal station, semaphored, and learnt that all boats had landed the other side of Mizzen Head. That relieved us immensely. The next duty was to see if we couldn't salve the ship.

Her name was the *Quantoek*, of 4470 gross tons, and she had come across the Atlantic with a very valuable cargo. I think her timber and hull were valued at £250,000, but she was in a very sad condition and likely to founder. It so happened that *Snowdrop's* captain was one of my friends, and our

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friendship dated back long before that other amusing occasion when one misty day off this very headland he had taken me for a submarine and fired a couple of shells, of which one was really quite well placed, falling only ten yards short. Commander Sherston was at first in favour of beaching *Quantock* round the corner in Crookhaven, but I knew every creek and bay of that south-west Irish coast intimately, and *Quantock* was drawing so much water in her present condition that she would never have got right into this haven; she would pretty well block the entrance for weeks to come and be a most tempting target for a submarine's torpedo. It was therefore decided to carry on to Berehaven, although this meant towing her for thirty miles, with every possibility of her sinking before we got there. *Snowdrop* put a couple of her officers and some men aboard the helpless steamer, and a long tow-rope was connected up. I was myself summoned to assist Commander Sherston on *Snowdrop's* bridge with the navigation, and whilst the patrol craft escorted us zigzagging about, keenly on the lookout for submarines, the slow progress began. It took us eight hours to do those thirty miles. *Quantock* was behaving like a wilful creature, suddenly going about like a sailing ship, and then careering madly on the other tack, so that you wondered how long the tow-line would last. They were doing their best to control her with the hand-steering gear right aft, but she seemed to miss her rightful freedom of the seas and to resent being taken in hand. To this day I cannot understand why that submarine didn't come back and make a long shot, for with our speed of less than four knots she could have settled *Snowdrop*, *Quantock* and all. Eventually we managed to straighten the steamer so as to go through the narrow opening of Berehaven boom defence, and long after dark anchored

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here, where she was to remain a considerable time, for it was found that her back was broken. She was now so deep that at low water her keel touched the bottom, and she could never have lasted much longer outside in the Atlantic swell. The satisfactory thing was that a quarter of a million sterling had been snatched from the enemy and Davy Jones. And then came another of those appreciative messages from the Commander-in-Chief which made tired men happy.

Now this had been purely an extemporised bit of salvage by vessels intended for patrol, and it was such incidents as this which suggested the advisability and importance of having real tugs organised round our coasts ready to go out and save valuable steamers after attack. Experience had proved that often the lame ship would be kept afloat by her bulkheads or her cargo for quite a time, and *Quantock's* hull with its gaping holes had been kept afloat by her timber cargo. Thus the Admiralty that year organised a special Rescue Tug service, which was stationed at various centres, the three principal ports being Buncrana, Queenstown and Falmouth. As many tugs as could be hired were taken up, though there was found to be a serious shortage of ocean-going craft of that description in the United Kingdom, for Holland is the great specialist in this class of work. The Admiralty therefore had to supplement the available fleet by building some of their own. The first to be ready measured 175 ft. long, 34 ft. in beam, drew 16 ft. and had a speed of thirteen knots. These and the hired tugs were given the white ensign, wireless and were well armed.

This Rescue Tug service became a huge success. The masters as a rule came from the Mercantile Marine, the mates were selected from men who had been in fishing smacks, and the craft paid for themselves over and over again. During the last seven

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months of that year these tugs were able to save sixty-nine vessels which had been torpedoed or mined, and in the next year the number of salvages was higher still. It was yet another example of how the brotherhood of the sea, properly organised and disciplined, could be worked at a time of great anxiety and amid grave danger ; but the following is an actual incident sufficiently illustrative of this scheme in practical application.

On the 16th August 1918 the armed Rescue Tug *Fylde* was towing four sailing ships from Waterford across the southern part of St George's Channel ; but when she was still some thirty miles short of St Govan's Head she encountered an adventure. She had her tow disposed in two pairs, and there was only the armed trawler *Ribble II.*, commanded by Skipper F. W. Slade, R.N.R., as escort ; it was therefore an occasion likely to tempt any submarine. Actually at five minutes past three that afternoon a U-boat did show up, and the latter began shelling at 6000 yards. *Fylde* therefore starboarded her helm and brought her convoy stern on to the enemy, so that two of the sailing ships which also were armed were able to open fire. *Ribble* went straight for the U-boat, and although the trawler had nothing better than a 6-pdr., tackled the job at 5500 yards.

Ribble was now to receive the full force of the enemy's bombardment, including three direct hits and shells bursting over the deck, but at 4500 yards managed to strike the submarine twice. All this time the *Fylde*, under Lieutenant A. F. Egalton, R.N.V.R., was continuing her course, keeping convoy and enemy astern, but cleverly altering slightly to port and starboard as requisite so that the tug's gun would bear. *Ribble*, in spite of damage and casualties, steamed up to the much better armed submarine, and at 1400 yards

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got in a couple more hits. The German objected to this, so immediately made a smoke screen and began running away to the westward at high speed on the surface, with the fishermen steaming after her as fast as the engines would drive. *Ribble* again fired, but the German got out of range, though presently another trawler and three drifters chased. But the nett result was that though the enemy with his long-range guns had fired about seventy rounds, *Ribble* and *Fylde* between them had done about the same. Thanks to the tug's excellent seamanship in avoiding confusion to her convoy, and thanks to the trawler's plucky aggressiveness, those ships were able to reach port as originally intended.

These fishermen crews were some of the hardest-worked people of the whole war, and after living with them afloat during those interesting times, and renewing friendships later on in peace time, I feel that it is a matter for regret that the public is so little concerned with this splendid race of seafarers. It is the old story ; so long as everything works smoothly and without halt no remark is made. But when the fish fails to reach the table, people begin to remember these fellows and their ships. For centuries these men have gone about their work without asking or receiving notice ; yet it was the Great War which at once showed that as mine-sweepers and submarine-hunters they were as essential to the safety of the Grand Fleet as to the ships of commerce. Without these fishermen it would have been utterly impossible to maintain safe channels for vessels entering or leaving our ports.

On the 4th August 1914 there were hundreds of British steam trawlers working either separately or in fleets about the North Sea and further waters. Off the north-east coast many hundreds of steam drifters were

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being employed following the herring fishery, some two hundred sailing smacks from Lowestoft were using their nets off the Dowsing, whilst on the south coast there had come out from Ramsgate, Brixham and elsewhere many other smacks. Thus, altogether there were most of 10,000 fishing craft at that time owned in England and Wales alone, forming a unique brotherhood of 44,000 men. It was hardly suspected that here was a ready-made Marine capable of practically any kind of coastal work.

At 8.15 this memorable August night instructions were issued by the Admiralty that no fishing vessel was to be allowed to sail for North Sea grounds, and all vessels were to return into port by the following daylight. The harbour-masters along the east coast were telegraphed to this effect, and a steam trawler was sent to inform the Lowestoft smacks. And then gradually the Navy found that fishermen as well as their craft were essential for carrying on the war, yet at the same time others had to be allowed, under great risk, to maintain the fish supplies. How dangerous this occupation was to be needed little emphasis, for almost immediately fifteen trawlers, whilst at work harvesting the sea's products, were sunk by enemy cruisers and destroyers, and the crews taken prisoners to Wilhelms-haven, thus paralysing the fishing-port of Boston till the end of hostilities. Before the war our home fish supply equalled in weight one-third of the total meat supply, and before many months had passed the Navy had commandeered practically all the biggest and best fishing vessels, leaving only the old men and boys to carry on this industry with second-class craft. But they landed 400,000 tons of fish, even if whilst peacefully employed they lost over 600 vessels, for dangers they ignored with their well-tested indomitable spirit. But, you see, they had a fine historic tradition to keep

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up, and tradition is a wonderful inspiration when times are anxious.

Long before William the Conqueror came over, English fishermen went forth to catch herrings in the North Sea. On the south coast the Cinque Ports fishermen were a body of seafarers who were required to provide and man ships for the King's service, and further west it was the Devonshire fishermen going out across the Atlantic after the cod who were able to afford knowledge for those pioneers that would presently colonise North America or advance in search of the north-west passage. For centuries generations of our fishermen had been accustomed to fighting either against pirates or the King's enemies in the olden days ; and even after the introduction of steam the Royal Navy find these sturdy fishing families one of the chief sources for supplying crews to man modern fighting ships. In addition to all this, the fisherman by the nature of his calling is accustomed to those hard knocks which only the sea can give. Therefore a bond of great antiquity and considerable strength already existed between the Royal Navy and the fishing fleets. The skippers and crews felt that the responsibility with which they were now entrusted, together with the granting of the white ensign and naval uniform, were something really worth owning ; they were put to a great test, with considerable freedom of activity and judgment. But there was also that romantic realisation of being out in a grand adventure. It is, indeed, one of the most delightful and refreshing facts that in these days of industrial unrest you will find how keenly these fishermen look back on those four years during which they kept the seas. I have talked to scores of them round the coast, and it is rarely that you don't find them remarking that those were the most interesting years of their lives. "And I'd go back

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to-morrow, if they need me," is usually the summing up.

I suppose that no body of sailors had such opportunity as these fishermen had for maintaining the chivalrous custom of the sea. Often have you read in peace time of their craft performing rescues, especially in the North Sea, that long ago they had become a kind of deep-water lifeboat service, for there is nothing like a trawler or drifter for bad weather. But during the war there was scarcely a big disaster when some of these craft did not appear on the scene and save many valuable lives. It would form quite a considerable list if we totalled up the figures ; but even during those first months we do well to remember that it was fishermen who were able to rescue survivors from those three torpedoed cruisers *Crecy*, *Aboukir* and *Hogue*. It was Skipper William Pillar, in his Brixham sailing smack, who by downright hard seamanship during a January heavy gale rescued seventy-one men belonging to the torpedoed battleship *Formidable* ; and later on forsook his fishing and joined up with the mine-sweeping trawlers. When *Lusitania* went down patrol trawlers came steaming along as fast as they could be driven, next rescued and comforted from the grip of death people both of British and American nationalities. A few weeks later one trawler alone was able to save from drowning 166 passengers, mostly women and children, from the 15,000-ton White Star liner *Arabic*, which had been ruthlessly torpedoed.

The number of warships and mercantile vessels saved by these trawlers and drifters during those four busy years will never be known. Sometimes it was by direct action such as actually sweeping up the mine-field and attacking the submarine ; at other times it was the warning signal which enabled the other vessels to avoid danger zones. Many an airman, British and

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German, owes his life to these fishermen, and there were even cases where the aeroplane was salvaged also. Such incidents were not devoid of humour, as in the case of the Lowestoft fishing craft which was able to pick up a couple of German aviators in the North Sea. One was a mechanic and the other was an officer. Take them straight back into port? Not likely! For a couple more days the skipper continued his fishing, and the mechanic was glad to occupy his time lending a hand with the work; but that which tickled the Englishmen was the sight of the officer trying to keep up the rigid dignity of his military profession on the deck of this lively sailing smack.

Perhaps there is no English county in which the old sea tradition is more strong than along the coast of Devonshire, which during the past centuries has given history such intrepid navigators and mariners. Now immediately round the corner to the east of Start Point lighthouse is, or was, the fishing hamlet of Hallsands, which was built closer to the sea than almost any other village. From here the little open boats have been accustomed to go forth into Start Bay and out towards the lively area of the Start race after their crab and lobster pots. Tides are strong here and the wind soon kicks up a nasty dangerous sea; but these fishermen are real sailormen, and the instinct after all these years is in the womenfolk too. Unfortunately, on the night of 26th January 1917, whilst so many fishermen were out at the war, there blew a strong south-easterly gale, which synchronised with an unusually high spring tide.

Now, during the years 1897 to 1902, large quantities of sand had been removed from Hallsands by the contractors making the Keyham Dockyard extension works at Devonport. Many people had prophesied that this would have an injurious effect, though pro-

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tection walls had been erected. When, therefore, this January gale came it sent the angry sea over the protection walls and entirely destroyed the southern end of the village, so that as you go past that bit of shore to-day it looks as if a plague had driven habitation away. But the fishing families were housed in the neighbouring villages of Beesands and Torcross until new houses could be built.

One of these Hallsands families will not be forgotten, for in that same year 1917 the sea tradition of doing good deeds was most admirably exhibited by the younger generation. There had died a fisherman named Trout, one of those who used to go out in his little crabber ; but after his death Ella Trout and her sister supported their widowed mother and family by fishing also. On the 8th of September, Ella, aged twenty, with her cousin, William Trout, aged ten, were in their boat getting mackerel, just off the Start, when there occurred such a violent explosion in the neighbourhood as nearly to upset their boat. Ella then looked and beheld a steamer sinking rapidly, having just been torpedoed ; in fact the vessel went down within ninety seconds, before there was time for any boats to be launched. This locality was another favourite operational area for enemy torpedoes and mines, as the Hallsands people well knew. But the girl was not going to be put off by any thought of what the submarine might do to her ; her own instinct told her that there might be a chance to save life. Unfortunately wind and tide were both against her, so she and the boy lowered sail, got out the oars and pulled as rapidly as they had strength to the position of the disaster about a mile away.

Other boats also left their fishing, but the two cousins rowed with such zest that only a motor-boat arrived on the scene before them. She then took her

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tiny craft among the floating wreckage and was able to find a coloured seaman already in a drowning condition. It is difficult for even a strong man to get another into a boat in these circumstances without upsetting ; but this girl made her cousin steady the tiny craft whilst she exerted all her force and did haul the fellow on board. He was nearly naked and mostly dead, but with kindly attention she wrapped his dripping body in a sail and managed to revive him, and then rowed about to seek other survivors ; but only eight more were picked up by a motor-boat. She then saw a patrol vessel coming along, so she was able to stop them and give the first report of the disaster. The rescued man was also transferred, so that he might have better treatment. Thus this plucky and resourceful girl well deserved the Medal of the Order of the British Empire that was presently conferred on her by the King.

But on the north-east coast this same unselfish resolve to save life was manifested right at the beginning of the war. It was the last Thursday of October 1914 that there occurred a famous gale. The autumn that year had so far been exceptionally fine, but to-night the glass had tumbled back, the wind blew with tremendous force from the north-east and fully made up for the fine weather spell. The result was that the whole of the Yorkshire coast was a lee shore, and there was great risk to any of our shipping making harbour, or trying to keep along the buoyed channels which had been swept clear of mines. I have particular reason to remember this night, as I was coming in from the sea up the Humber, where there was little enough shelter, and Grimsby outer harbour was like a wild, boiling cauldron, full of tugs, trawlers, naval picket-boats, all bumping each other most shamelessly, vessels outside in the roads dragging their anchors, the wind and waves making a deafening noise. Coasting

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schooners came tearing along under short sail, another got ashore at the edge of Spurn Point and lit flares for the lifeboat to go out to her. Those aboard the guardship H.M.S. *Victorious* thought it was the enemy approaching and promptly went to quarters. There was another coaster also, whose captain told me that although he was already off the Humber entrance when the gale came on, he felt compelled to go right out into the North Sea and ride it out there. But he had a bad time, and when a few days later he came into the river he decided to abandon altogether the intended voyage to Scotland, and landed his cargo at Grimsby instead.

On this pitch dark boisterous night, then, the hospital ship *Rohilla* was steaming down the north-east coast. She was a fine big vessel of 7891 tons, and had aboard her at the time 220 persons, Captain D. L. Neilson being in command. Besides her officers and crew there were chaplains, nurses, doctors, sick berth attendants and so on. Navigation was no easy matter, seeing that so many lights along the coast had been put out as a war measure : and yet it was not safe to venture away from the restricted channel, since the enemy mine-layers had been so busy. There was already one big minefield off the Tyne, and another some distance off the Humber. It was under these circumstances that whilst proceeding through that intense darkness the *Rohilla* got too far to leeward and struck the rocks about three-quarters of a mile from Whitby in the early hours of Friday morning.

The loss of life was then inevitable, seventy-three being either drowned or perishing through exposure, but it seemed, for a long while, as if this list would have been much greater ; for the lifeboats were beaten back from the shore and the rocket apparatus was unable to connect up through that force of wind. The heavy seas were pounding and smashing the *Rohilla*, till it

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seemed as if steel-plates could not endure more than a brief period further. You can imagine what it felt like, firstly, for those on board isolated throughout that black Friday, painfully conscious that no lifeboat in the world could ever reach them under those existing conditions ; and secondly, for those eager, brave people on shore—fishermen, lifeboat crew, soldiers, townspeople—it was pathetic to witness this suffering so near at hand and yet not to be able to send help. But throughout that Friday night a small illumination had shone from the cliff head as a message of hope to those stricken people huddled together in the broken ship.

Saturday morning dawned, and the *Rohilla* survivors were overjoyed when they saw activity ashore and preparations being made to launch the Whitby lifeboat ; they even waved their hats and cheered lustily. With the utmost difficulty the boat was floated, and none but a plucky crew, no men except inspired with a sense of the sea's brotherhood, would ever have made such a daring adventure ; for it was almost certain suicide to think they could strive against this onshore gale and these outrageous waves. But they made the attempt, they strove and fought through the furious surf, they kept being driven back and narrowly missed the rocks, they contended again and the crowds on shore held their breath. But it was no use, the wreck could never be reached, for nature to-day was still dominant and exulting in its almightiness ; men must wait till its temper was appeased. And then something happened. The crowd could see a figure on the wreck waving ; presently a signal was semaphored from the *Rohilla*. "We are going to swim. Look out." Five minutes passed, and then three men dived into the angry seas. The Whitby folk watched them as one follows some great drama in which Greek heroes contend against fate. The trio were being tossed and

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buffeted about, thrown this way and that, now visible, now seemingly drowned by the boiling surf. And then, after a trying suspense, three men, quite exhausted but still alive, were brought to the shore by dozens of their fellow-countrymen, who waded out to fetch them. Then, wrapped in blankets, the three survivors were carried away into shelter.

Now this incident was immediately repeated ; for nine more were seen to dive in, but at irregular intervals in twos and threes ; and hundreds of shore-dwellers spread themselves along the edge of the water watching for heads to show up in the frothy surf. If it had not been so terribly serious, people would have found it an exciting game. "There's one !" someone would exclaim. "Here comes another !" It was thrilling enough for a mere watcher, and then fisher-folk with ropes would wade into the water gesticulating and shouting to the swimmers where to land. This continued for hours, about fifty persons trying to swim through the icy water ; and whilst the Whitby fishermen risked their own lives to snatch others from death, fishermen's wives rushed back into their houses to come out with blankets and jugs of steaming tea and coffee, whilst others of the spectators fetched brandy. Some of these fisherwomen with true Yorkshire nobility waded breast high into the sea in order to succour some struggling swimmer ; but there were eight or nine men who failed to reach land alive. Either they were pulled back by the waves, or they would succumb just as their bodies touched mother earth ; but there were three men who came off in a raft, which capsized, and two of them were drowned. The daylight ended, another dark night came over the wreck, and still it was utterly impossible for the lifeboat to go out.

Those who remained in part of the *Rohilla* were not merely enduring the bitter cold, but the pangs of

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hunger ; and the piece of wreckage that was their home was likely to break up at any moment. But just before the weak autumn light faded, a semaphore message had been made from the shore assuring the survivors that everything would be done to save them, so far as was humanly possible. The Tyneside Territorial Engineers had their searchlight erected on the cliff, and soon after three the next morning it was able to signal the good news that help was coming. For, whilst that onshore wind made it impossible for the Whitby lifeboat to get out, the motor-lifeboat *Henry Vernon*, fifty miles further up the coast, was leaving South Shields under Coxswain Robert Smith and coming south. This was splendid news indeed, but, when she did arrive, the sea was still too bad to approach the wreck. Smith signalled, however, that he was standing by and would make an effort to aid them on the ebb tide, and this he did, for the wind was now south-east.

So a few hours later, with the assistance of a local pilot, the *Henry Vernon* was steered alongside that which remained of a once beautiful liner, and was received with tremendous cheers from the throats of tired, starving men. Then a few hurried orders from Coxswain Smith, and in spite of the heavy seas which threatened to capsize the lifeboat, all but one got quickly into the *Henry Vernon* ; for Captain Neilson before leaving the wreck stopped, scanned the faces of the rescued and inquired if anyone had been left behind. " We're all here, sir," one of the crew answered, and then suddenly remembered something. " I've left my kitten," added the man. Whereupon, without a word, Captain Neilson went back, found the kitten in the wheelhouse and carried it to the sailor owner.

And then the lifeboat went through some ugly seas, pitched, rolled, shook herself, and finally came in

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triumphant with thousands of people cheering rescuers and the last batch of survivors. Motor cars, stretchers, blankets and willing hands were waiting to succour men who had fasted for fifty hours and lived through hell. The *Henry Vernon*, in accordance with those high traditions which have always characterised fishing crews, had done a fine brave bit of seamanship in leaving South Shields that Saturday night during a fierce south-easterly gale, for the wind had veered by then. And when she returned to the Tyne on Sunday afternoon there were thousands of persons there to welcome her. Warships and other vessels shrilled the air with their whistles ; soldiers, sailors and civilians cheered themselves hoarse ; the Mayor of Tynemouth was there to shake hands with each man as he stepped out of the boat ; and then the crowd carried the crew away shoulder high. Eight and three-quarter hours had that lifeboat been reaching Whitby through Saturday night against a head wind and abominable sea ; but she had done a non-stop run, and here she was back again, safe, with only a slight damage to her stem.

It is such incidents as these which, in spite of our political and industrial upheavals, keep alive those high-souled principles of great deeds based on brotherly charity. There was yet another instance as recently as February 1926, but this time it was the fishermen who were in trouble, and it is good to note that their be-frienders were those of a people with whom the British Government previously had certain disagreements. The scene is the west coast of Ireland, where the untamed Atlantic comes dashing in against cliffs and lonely islands, and everything suggests nature in its primitive, undeveloped state. Even the islanders in their lonely independence, with their strong religious sense and romantic temperament, appear to the average Englishman relics of a past century and a foreign country. If,

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however, you remember John M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea*, whose action takes place on "an island off the West of Ireland"; or recollect that preface to *The Playboy of the Western World*, where he says that some of the phrases which he employed had been heard from "fishermen along the coast from Kerry to Mayo," you will at once get the atmosphere of this locality. Here materialism has never entered, but extreme poverty exists along with the grandeur of rock-girt coastline, majestic seas and land mountains. Modern civilisation has failed to reach so far as these Atlantic islands; even the boats which take occasional trips over and down the great waves to the mainland, handled with brave skill, are mere light "currachs" made out of lath and tarred canvas. They are fast, too, and I have seen them under sail in weather that seemed simply asking for trouble.

For many years steam trawlers out of Milford and Swansea have been accustomed to come across to the south and west of Ireland, and then out to fish off the Porcupine Bank; then on their homeward way they will get hold of the west Irish coast, fix their position and steam south again. Now on the early morning of Sunday, 14th February 1926, there were three of these fine Bristol Channel trawlers making the land off the Mayo coast, on their way home with fish to Swansea. There were the *Tenby Castle*, the *Cardigan Castle* and the *Rotherslade Castle*, and it was one of those nights when the Atlantic seas were made terrible by a heavy south-west gale, the like of which Skipper William Welborn, of *Tenby Casile*, had never experienced in twenty years afloat. And, to make matters worse, there was that damp thick mist which so often prevails off Ireland, so that a vessel finds herself right on the rocks before she sights them. In day-time the frothy wash from the rocks may indicate the approach to dangers, but at

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night-time when coming in from the open sea it is always a most anxious and difficult time for any skipper. The tidal currents are uncertain, and I often heard captains of 15-knot ships off here remark that in twenty-four hours they had been set as much as thirty miles.

This particular February night was so dark that you could almost feel its pitch blackness. And then at 5 a.m., when human nature is at its weakest, and so many good ships have encountered disaster, the *Tenby Castle*, whilst trying to seek some temporary shelter among the many islands and bays, suddenly crashed her bows against the rocks good and hearty. That was the first intimation of danger, and those of the crew who were below sleeping were hurled violently from their bunks. Besides Skipper Welborn the crew consisted of two engineers, a wireless operator, a second hand (or mate), boatswain, three deckhands, two firemen and a cook, or twelve all told, most of whom came from Hull, Lowestoft or Brixham. The boatswain was Jim Pine, of Brixham, an old friend of mine, for he had served as one of my crew during the war, one of the best all-round fellows I have yet been shipmates with; in fact, there were others in that *Tenby Castle* who had also been in the Royal Naval Reserve temporarily.

The shock and lurch brought all hands in the *Tenby Castle* to sudden realisation. The engines were reversed, and then it was found how badly she was leaking forward. At ten minutes past five M'Gruer, the Inverness wireless operator, sent out "S.O.S.," which was answered by the Valentia station, some hundred and twenty miles further down the coast, who informed the trawler that there were no ships in the vicinity to come to her assistance, but they would send a craft from Fenit as soon as possible. (Fenit is in Tralee Bay, where the notorious German S.S. *Aud* arrived but

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failed to land her arms and ammunition in April 1916 for the Easter Irish rebellion ; but, just to the north of Fenit, Sir Roger Casement landed the following day from the German submarine U-22 and was arrested.)

Tenby Castle, having got clear by about a mile, let go anchor in thirty-five fathoms, but it was still too dark and foggy to see where they were or what they had hit. One thing was pretty certain, the ship was in a bad way. The trawler's boat had been lowered over the side by the derrick in readiness, flares were now burned in the hope of attracting aid from land or sea, and by 7 a.m. the trawler by her heavy lurches and behaviour generally showed that she was doomed. A final wireless message was sent out informing Valentia and all ships that the *Tenby Castle* was fast sinking and now being abandoned. And—note this—she also requested any trawlers, which should receive this message, to proceed to a given approximate position.

But quitting a ship, as we all know, is often fraught with exciting incidents, and it was so in this case. There was such a heavy swell, and it was so wretchedly dark, that the evolution was extremely awkward. The heavy boat was surging and banging against the steel trawler, so that it suddenly snapped its painter in two and drifted rapidly astern, leaving twelve men doomed to go down with their ship. And then one of the two firemen, L. Claudsdale, of Hull, did a very plucky thing : for he dived into those inky seas, swam after the drifting boat, held on to it and very nearly lost his life. Can you conceive of a worse nightmare than this gallant fireman failing to catch up with the fugitive and then being driven to leeward as helpless as a feather, whilst his mates left to their fate counted the minutes towards death ? And remember he was not a sailor, but a fireman, accustomed to working down

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below with shovel and coals amid the sound of clanging furnace doors.

My ole man's a fireman,
Wot d'yer fink of that ?
'E wears gorblimey trousers,
An' a gorblimey 'at.

'E wears a blinkin' choker
Around 'is blinkin' froat ;
'Cos my ole man's a fireman
On a Nelder Dempster boat.

So a poet wrote of a Liverpool brother ; only, Claudsdale belonged to the fraternity of fishermen. The *Tenby Castle* people quickly threw him a rope, and it was so well aimed that it got round his neck and nearly choked the life out of him, but still he stuck to the heavy clumsy boat, bent the line on to the broken painter and so got her alongside the trawler. A splendid piece of work, which unquestionably saved human lives. Every one now got into her ; Skipper Welborn, of course, in accordance with the tradition of the sea (though frequently broken when certain U-boat captains did not wait), was the last to leave the sinking ship. Have you ever spoken to a captain immediately after his vessel has been lost ? Then you know that whether he has been in the right or wrong, whether it was by accident or negligence, he is just then inwardly feeling the most miserable person in the whole world. But Skipper Welborn hid all such expressions from his crew, kept up their spirits during the ensuing hours, showed himself courageous, optimistic and a true leader of men, fit to have command. From now onwards it was his spirit which was to save the eleven, if ever they were to win through.

The night passed away ; there came that hopeless

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dawn, which artists and poets so often stress, and with it there appeared land about a couple of miles off. There was still a heavy sea, the boat was awkward to row—it was well loaded with a dozen men—the wind was fierce and the tide was strong. At times the waves came drumming down and broke over this wooden boat, as if to smash her into bits. The men were tired, nerve-worn, cold and wet, for they had saved nothing but the clothes on their backs. About 8.30 a.m. they had rowed not more than a mile when the poor old *Tenby Castle* gave another horrible lurch and then made a final plunge in a cloud of steam as the boilers burst. She had gone for ever.

Another half-hour's strenuous pulling and the boat was seeking out some suitable creek, but the rocks rose sheer inhospitably above them. And then there came out from this land somewhere a small, swift light "curragh" rowed by a couple of islanders, who guided the trawlermen into a little natural harbour. For this was the island of Inishturk, which you will find marked on any map, about eight miles from the Mayo mainland. Now these islanders were poor, but rich in charity; their coast was inhospitable, yet they were kindness itself. Their speech was strangely musical, archaic, Synge-like, and you can picture, as in *Riders to the Sea*, the "cottage kitchen, with nets, oilskins, spinning-wheel . . . the pot-oven by the fire."

But out of their deep poverty they showed the trawlermen "hospitality that we shall never forget. They put us in various houses, gave us clean beds of straw to lie upon the floors, and gave us warm food."

And here for three days the shipwrecked mariners remained waiting till the gale and seas should subside. But on the Wednesday afternoon they were piloted ashore to the mainland, then walked five miles, where the Civic Guards drove them by motor to

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Clifden. They were given food and clothing and went *via* Galway back to Swansea. Fortunately, all were saved, but there was nothing else except the boat and the *Tenby Castle* logbook, which Skipper Welborn managed to take just before leaving her.

Now when *Tenby Castle* had called up sister trawlers on her wireless that Sunday morning, the message reached both *Cardigan Castle* and *Rotherslade Castle*, who proceeded to search for the distressed ship. But *Cardigan Castle* had no means of being informed that *Tenby Castle's* crew had been saved ; or rather she had her wireless, but the latter could send no news from Inishturk. And thus it was that unfortunately *Cardigan Castle* spent Sunday cruising about among the islands near Slyne Head, whilst actually Skipper Welborn and party were all safe ashore still further to the northward. Now that same Sunday night, during the gale and darkness, *Cardigan Castle* struck a rock about 11.30 p.m. The exact position is difficult to locate, since the *Cardigan Castle* hardly knew herself, but two bodies were washed ashore at Louisburgh, which is on the southern shore of Clew Bay, where the south-west wind would likely enough bring them. One of these was George R. Russell, her wireless operator, and on him were found his diary and a short will leaving everything to his wife. On the Monday a strange sight was seen from Clare Island, for there was a small boat drifting about without control. Some of the islanders put off and found it contained a man, barely alive, and a dog. They were brought ashore, the man fully recovered and turned out to be one of the *Cardigan Castle's* crew. When the latter's boat had been lowered and he had got in, it was swept away before the others could leave the ship. One man, however, did make a jump, missed, and was drowned. The dog leapt also, and was picked up. There was some mystery by the

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fact that a piece of board was picked up with a message written on it stating, " We three on a place called High Island. Shipwrecked at the entrance to Clifden Bay." But though *Rotherslade Castle* cruised around here and Friar Island, and an Irish aeroplane made a reconnaissance from the air, no more survivors were found. But if we have any imagination at all, we can readily picture the anguish of the *Cardigan Castle's* men without a boat, some of them soon drowned, and the rest swimming desperately for a time, afterwards to perish of hunger and exhaustion.

Once again these and other incidents remind us that modern ships go through far more risks than most of us realise. So long as all goes well, there is nothing to arouse suspicion ; but when the least mistake is made in navigation near the land, then gales and thick weather and monstrous seas are there to prove how feeble is man, how weak are the arts of shipbuilder and engineer, when it comes to a straight fight with nature herself. It is good for us to remember that we voyage under a special indulgence and permit, which may at times be withdrawn.

CHAPTER X

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THE following is another real life incident which might scarcely be accepted as true if it had reached one casually. But the central figure happens to be one of my friends of many years' acquaintance, and I got him to relate it to me with his own lips. After you have considered quietly in your own mind the crisis of this tragedy and trajected yourself into that position, and begun to realise how you would have felt and what you could have done, I am certain that no one can possibly deny that the age of miracles is passed, and nobody could ever afford to abandon hope even in the most desperate event. But to approach death nearer than herein related, yet to come out alive, I should imagine quite impossible.

First of all, let us see the ship, and if ever a craft was suitably named it was this. She is a "Fifie," that well-known Scotch fishing type, but had been converted into a ketch and employed as a trawler. She was called the *Hopeful*, and her measurements are 69 ft. long, 20 ft. beam, draught 6½ ft. I had first met her amateur skipper whilst yachting in a foreign port, and I know he will forgive me if I describe him as a muscular, hard-case yachtsman, as tough as he is hearty, as plucky as he is sincere in all that he does. For years he has been making some excellent cruises between the North Sea and the coast of Spain in small sailing craft, but this which happened during the year 1921 was the most eventful.

At that time the Rev. George Gordon, as I may

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introduce him, was chaplain of a well-known naval establishment on the south coast of England, and the idea was to take the *Hopeful* for a sail from Littlehampton in Sussex to Vigo, Spain, returning home by the northern Spanish coast and Brittany. With him he took a Ramsgate fisherman; one of the officials from that naval school who had had experience of the sea as a steamship man; and five of the boys from the same institution. Thus the crew were eight all told; and after getting the *Hopeful* ready for sea, she started out on 11th July, and made a call first at the Isle of Wight. On the way thither a significant thing occurred. That portion of the ship's rail which is movable and lifted aside for lowering a fishing vessel's punt into the water, had been accidentally dropped overboard. Now there is a well-known maxim among yachtsmen that in case of a man falling overboard it is best to go back not by staying the craft, and thus wasting precious moments, but to gybe her all standing and risk that, even in bad weather. This idea presented itself to Mr Gordon's mind when he gybed to pick up that piece of wooden rail, and he gave instructions then and there that a lifebuoy was to be placed on the cabin hatch, nor was it ever to be removed, except for the one special purpose. The importance of this order will, in due course, manifest itself.

Now after quitting the Isle of Wight a course was set across the English Channel, and there were variations in the weather from a fresh easterly wind to thunderstorms, light airs, then north-westerns and fog; the signals off the Channel Isles being distinctly heard. On 16th July the French port of L'Aberwrach was entered. After crossing the Bay of Biscay the coast of Spain was sighted on 20th July, and the *Hopeful* anchored in Ferrol Harbour, proceeding next day past Cape Finisterre, and so to Cornubion, Arosa Bay and

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through waters where small Tudor ships used to bring their English cargoes and pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostella. It was after some of her crew had been inland to Santiago's cathedral that, on 26th July, having taken on board provisions for the return voyage, the *Hopeful*, with a light air, made her way out into the Atlantic in mild sultry weather.

But now note what followed. It is significant of the sea's treachery that this calm and peacefulness should presently be transformed into peril and tragedy. Presently there came a fair wind from the south-west, and that historic Cape Finisterre, so familiar to Drake and our Elizabethan ancestors, was passed at 8 p.m. Darkness set in and there was a curious ominous gloom over the Spanish coast. Mr Gordon went below and turned in, leaving the Ramsgate fisherman in charge of the first watch, which was to be from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. The ketch had been making good progress through the water, but by 1.30 a.m. she was already very lively, and his sailor-like instinct aroused Mr Gordon and told him his presence was required on deck. On coming up he found that wind and sea had considerably increased ; in fact, there was now a fresh Atlantic gale, with occasional squalls of rain, and an ugly big sea was already there but with every indication of becoming worse.

His first order, therefore, was to get the jibheaded topsail off her, and he himself took the helm whilst this was being done. Thus eased, the *Hopeful* behaved much better, with less inclination to gripe when running down a sea. At 2 a.m. the fisherman turned in, but an hour later had to be called, as it became necessary to haul down the second reef in the mainsail, trice up the tack and double-reef the mizzen. She now ran before the wind quite nicely, but in order to prevent her rushing up to windward the forestaysail was reefed

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and hauled aweather. In this manner the *Hopeful* sped on ; and Mr Gordon, alone on deck with some of his boys, was sitting on a cushion by the wheel steering, and the time passed towards dawn. The seas were now big, tremendous, grand, and the whole watch was remarking the beauty of their colouring as they broke angrily.

But, as every sailorman well knows, there sometimes emerges out of the ocean rhythm one obstinate, self-determining monster, breaking through the steady swell, racing forwards, as if resolved to have its unruly revenge for all the ships it has allowed to pass in safety. The *Hopeful's* watch had been munching their biscuits in the early morn, but now looked aft at this terrible monster with some uneasiness. Would it pass along like the other waves and slip beneath the ketch's keel ? The watch was hoping so, but already it was towering like a fifteen-foot green wall above the stern, and then without pity or hesitation the unbridled monster exploded its wrath, broke against and over the vessel with a wild roar. What followed was immediate and terrible. At one onslaught it struck Mr Gordon on the left shoulder, throwing him and one of the boys into the Atlantic, at the same time cutting off level with the deck the hatchway.

And now let us view the situation through Mr Gordon's eyes. Here he was in his oilskins and sea-boots below the Atlantic ere he could realise what had happened. When he came to the surface and was able to use his eyes, he saw several things. One—and this in itself sufficient to break the heart of any courageous man—was the sight of the *Hopeful* sailing away over the crest of those great waves down into the trough and up again. Then he caught sight of that lifebuoy which had been on the demolished hatch. By swimming, in spite of his heavy clothes, he managed to reach the

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lifebuoy and place it over his head. (If you have ever tried this effort without undressing, you will know how difficult it is.) He next sighted a form floating by, which had been used during the cruise sometimes for a seat or a table. He saw that the boy managed to reach this and catch hold ; but the hatch cover was close by, so Mr Gordon gave him that and told him to hang on, whilst the padre himself tried to keep in the wake of the ship, being quite sure that in accordance with his standing instructions she would presently gybe, come back and pick them up. But now he could witness her trying ineffectually to stay—for those down below had rushed up on deck startled by the avalanche of water—and it was the bitterest grief of all to see the wrong tactics being used whilst those precious moments were fluttering away. We have all of us read in fiction of what it feels like to a man overboard, but there are no stories which give the same thrill as that which is actual bitter life. And if you think it over, what situation to any skipper could be more appalling than being a spectator at the misplaced attempts to save him from death ? As he himself remarked, “after a while she sailed on and disappeared behind the seas. This was the most depressing time, as while I could see her there seemed to be hope, but seeing her disappear, when if she had gybed she could have picked us up, produced mingled feelings of rage and despair.” I think we should all have felt just that at the least.

The position now among those angry crested seas needed little summing up. “I decided to drown, if I must, alongside the boy.” Mr Gordon, therefore, tying on his hat with a spare handkerchief, managed by paddling and manœuvring to get himself at length washed alongside the boy, who was then some distance away. Not for a minute did those infuriated seas show the slightest mercy, but broke over the solitary couple

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every fifteen or thirty seconds and swept them onwards in the crests several yards through broken water. There is not an insurance company in the world which would have gambled one coin on the lives of this harassed pair of mortals. The poor boy at the time of the accident had been sitting by his skipper's right hand with his back to the bulwark, and when the sea broke it must have dealt him an injuring blow against some obstruction, for the lad was now in a very bad way, the colour of mahogany, and suffering, quite apart from his immersion.

What to do? Would it be best to give him the life-buoy? Mr Gordon decided it would do the boy more good by holding him up from behind, making a lee for him from the breaking seas, whilst the youngster held on with his arms across the seat. So in this fashion sped the minutes; but then came a heavy sea, the boy threw back his head, let go his hold of the form, lay in the water helpless, vomited a quantity of blood and white mucus, and then gradually sank out of life into death. "I held on to him for a bit, but realising he was dead I let him go." There are thousands of men who would have been completely unnerved by this event; there are instances innumerable where, left to solitary existence in the vast ocean, the survivor would have gone raving mad. But the word "hopeful" had not forsaken her skipper, even if his ship had sailed away.

Have you ever realised in witnessing a water-polo match of the fatigue which the goalkeeper is undergoing even when the ball is at the other end? All the time he has to keep himself afloat, his temperature is running down and his physical strength is limited to a certain period; quite differently placed is he from the footballer who stands on his own feet firmly on solid earth. So it was with the *Hopeful's* skipper. Every moment of time was a struggle to keep his head

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above water, and those heavy clothes were doing their best to drag him down to destruction. Furthermore, he was getting cold, weak, and he had not had a meal since the previous evening.

But so long as the heart beats there is always hope ; and when this is reinforced by supreme personal courage and determination to look on the bright side, you can ask nothing more. So mark what followed. Without denying to himself the almost inevitable certainty of impending death, the skipper resolved that it should come only after a good fight. That determination was thus an excellent beginning. He then recovered the floating wooden form and turned it upside down. His next intention was both ingenious and amusing ; for he set about to change this into a small ocean-going ship. That is to say, he tore bits off his oilskin and rigged them up on the form's up-turned legs as a couple of square-sails. Now no one but a real genuine, practical seaman would ever have thought of that. The legs of the form were supported by a stay, and this he broke off and to it attached his handkerchief. He thus was able to rig a flagstaff with a signal for help. But who would be likely ever to see this tiny pre-historic craft washing about in the Atlantic waves ?

Still, it shows an amazing imaginative optimism, which, in my belief, could not be beaten in the whole realm of human sea experience. And, what was more, thus placed with his back to the sea and all " sail " well-drawing, he began to make progress before a fair wind with a view some day and somewhere of reaching the land if—and this was a tremendous condition—only his strength would last out. I remember him telling me not long after the incident how gradually he could feel weakness stealing over him as the sun rose high in the sky and the day passed on. A gull swooped down

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from the heavens to examine this strange spectacle in the watery waste, this incredible sight of a man making a crazy effort to live. Later on another hungry, avaricious bird visited him again. "All right, old gull, you can't eat my eyes yet. I shall probably be alive for just a few more hours. Call about three this afternoon."

It is so easy to be a philosopher ashore, with one's body resting in a comfortable chair, and one's senses soothed. One can arrive peacefully at conclusions, and with pleasure contemplate certain events. But when death is only a matter of simple arithmetic, and every hour becomes more grievous ; when hope and common sense are quarrelling, and there is no mental or nervous respite, how different it all seems ! Matters that were of little import become paramount ; great subjects slip down into their proper adjustment and are replaced. No one had treated that wooden form with respect, but now it was the most precious thing that ever floated. Had it not existed, had not chance hurled it into the sea, there would have been two lives destroyed instead of one.

The highly improbable is often the most possible. The chance of sighting another vessel in that limitless ocean before the sun should go down was admittedly moderately remote ; but the probability of any craft seeing a bit of oilskin and a white handkerchief above a sea-washed plank would be a credit only to a perfect look-out with marvellous eyes and extraordinary luck. Thus, as if to test man's optimism and faith to the extreme limit, Mr Gordon had the pain of seeing a steamer pass. He shouted and blew with his breath a whistle that he always carried ; but, of course, the steamer was too far off and never heard. Could any seaman forward or officer-of-the-watch on his bridge believe his own vision if he did catch sight of a handkerchief's whiteness on a wave's crest ? As easily it might

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be a seagull's wing, and then disappear without being heeded. But to argue thus would be contrary to the principle of hope. Rather, inasmuch as one steamer had passed, one more might come. "I then prayed there might be another, and after some time I saw one on my starboard hand." The highly improbable had happened, for she was comparatively close, though proximity is hard to reckon when your craft is but plank and the area is the wide ocean. Sculling with his hands, the amateur skipper made a desperate attempt to get his plank towards what looked like a great cliff on the water. It was now or never ; the very last opportunity that dear life could ever hold out. But, at last, when abeam of this good-looking steamship, Mr Gordon once again blew his whistle. For a while there was a suspense that was scarcely bearable. The ship hadn't heard, the officer-of-the-watch hadn't seen ; she was not going to stop, it was all over now !

But no ! There was a sudden activity up there, the wheel was being put hard over, she was coming round so as to make a lee. And even in his distressful situation Mr Gordon could not help noting with the critical eye of a brother seaman the admirable way in which that steamer was being handled. Turning to port she had stopped her engines, a rope was dropped, two lines in fact. But the big ship carried her way ; it was impossible to catch hold. The yachtsman shouted to "Come astern !" Then, "handling her like a boat they shot alongside me, I fending off with my fingers, and dropped me a rope." But he was too far gone to haul himself up, so the steamer threw down a bowline, someone came down a rope ladder, and thus the *Hopeful's* survivor was got on board after five and a half hours paddling and sailing about the Bay of Biscay ; for the exact position where he was picked up was Lat. 44° 3' N., Long. 8° 53' W. The conditions,

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according to the steamer's commanding officers, were "sea very high, wind 8-9." Any sailor reading this will understand well enough and recognise the kind of weather.

Now, once aboard this vessel, it is unnecessary to say that the brotherhood of the sea expressed itself in food, dry clothing, kindness and that good companionship which is the bond between one mariner and another regardless of class or nationality. She was the Halcyon Liner *Stad Dordrecht*, of Rotterdam, with 6300 tons of corn from Rosario, bound for Antwerp. Captain N. Kuiper was congratulated on the excellence of the look-out maintained aboard his ship, a vigilance that had brought about the miracle of life. But the scarcely incredible incident had so deeply impressed him, that for the rest of his seafaring career an even still more cautious look-out will be the rule under his command. Still, the story still needs rounding off. After a few days the *Stad Dordrecht* came up the Scheldt to Antwerp. Here Mr Gordon bade good-bye to his benefactor with imperishable memories, and reached England *via* the Harwich steamer. The first duty was then to seek out the parents of the lost boy and to break the sad news. After that came the journey back to Mr Gordon's Sussex home, still carrying with him the lifebuoy which had played such a memorable part in his life's crisis.

And eight hours later came sailing in sorrowfully the *Hopeful*. I leave you to guess the impression on all hands when the skipper was known to be alive. You could search the sea's literature and never find any news more dramatic than this. Her log from the morning of the accident showed that she had shipped a heavy sea which washed skipper and boy overboard. The ketch had a lot of water in her and the reef pennant on the main boom was broken. They had then

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hove-to, repaired the pennant, tried to stay her, but she refused to come round. They then wore ship and on the starboard tack tried to launch the boat, but found this was stove in. From about 7 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. the *Hopeful* had continued to search for the two missing, but after a vain attempt decided to make for home, and after five days of varying weather reached Littlehampton. Thus for about six hours she had been somewhere in the vicinity of her anxious skipper, though the intervening high seas had prevented them from seeing each other. Unquestionably only the height of the Dutch steamer had enabled that tiny dot of man and plank to be observed.

Such an occasion as this needs no further accentuating. It would be difficult to say which was the happier man—Mr Gordon in his gratitude to a brother mariner, or Captain Kuiper in his thankfulness that he had the good fortune to sight and succour a fellow-seaman in distress. Mr Gordon is now working among those splendid Brixham fishermen, and I know of a house, looking out across the harbour of tanned sails, where, if Captain Kuiper should ever enter, there would be a brother-seaman's handshake and overflowing kindness awaiting him. But it is at once the sailor's opportunity and privilege to render assistance to ships or mariners in distress. This, after all, is the greatest of lessons which the sea teaches, and no one who has been instructed by that harsh, cruel mother can ever be forgetful. "For the remaining years of life," wrote Mr Gordon after this escape from death, "one must endeavour to make good use of every opportunity of doing good, otherwise my return will be a failure. I only wish such good luck and attention may befall any other mariner who finds himself in a similar or worse predicament."

Now, here, because of its internationality, was a

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perfect instance of that marine comradeship which is ever calculated to bring together differing nations more closely than most human events can attract. The appeal to the highest in character, the rousing of admiration for gallant self-sacrifice, in the presence of maritime danger especially, can unite distant peoples in one strong bond with a speed and completeness which overcome every diplomatic obstacle. Few incidents in recent times have done more to bring together the peoples of the United States and Great Britain than that faithful, persistent friendship which captain and crew of the S.S. *President Roosevelt* extended to the captain and crew of the S.S. *Antinoe*. There was real pluck here, including the surrender of life for sake of brother seamen in need ; but it was exercised under specially difficult and prolonged conditions, which demanded consummate seamanship and boatmanship. For days after the news was known the Press of both countries continued to repeat its praise for this remarkable rescue, the wireless of the world emphasised the nobility of simple heroism, and, finally, the British Government took a hand and made an official act of gratitude. And, lest we should neglect to remember good deeds in a forgetful world, let us set down the plain narrative.

On 20th January 1926 the United States S.S. *President Roosevelt*, an oil-burning twin-screw liner, built in 1922, and measuring over 516 ft. long, left New York bound for Queenstown, Plymouth and Cherbourg. This is one of the very worst months in the Atlantic year, when even the biggest and fastest passenger steamers must submit to the ocean's governance and slow down or be smashed. From the second day out, and for practically the rest of the voyage, *President Roosevelt* encountered heavy weather. And then at 5.40 a.m. on 24th January she received on

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her radio an S.O.S. signal from the British freighter *Antinoe*, adding :—

“Do not know position. Noon yesterday latitude 46.10° N., longitude 39.58° approximately. Been hove to since.”

Here was a mid-Atlantic summons to the charity and good-will of one captain from another ; and it made no difference that the liner was in a hurry or that the cargo steamship would delay passengers and mails, besides using up costly fuel. All such considerations are out of the question when human lives are threatened. Captain G. Fried therefore ordered the *Roosevelt's* chief wireless operator to use the radio direction-finder and report every fifteen minutes as to how the *Antinoe* was bearing. The latter's position had been very vague, yet it was expected to sight her about 8.30 a.m. It was, however, not till five minutes after noon that the British single-funnel ship was observed right ahead with a heavy list to starboard, seas breaking cruelly over her from great heights, bullying her into complete submission.

Her commanding officer, Captain Tose, now communicated with Captain Fried :—

“We have not yet properly secured three hatches on account of heavy seas. We have secured steering-gear, which was damaged. Great difficulty to keep steam on account of sea-water in stokehold. Crew twenty-five and sufficient lifebelts. Hope keep afloat until weather moderates. Please will you stand by us. Our grain cargo has shifted, and we have heavy list to starboard. We cannot heave-to satisfactorily, as we cannot maintain sufficient steam.”

During the present century the utility of oil for

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modifying stormy seas has been proved many times, and the increasing adoption by big ships of oil fuel has given the rescuer a greater power in his salving efforts. It is possible to distribute the oil in generous quantities, thus making an extensive smooth patch for getting the pilot on board or for lowering boats ; and it is the heaviest, thickest oils which are the most effectual. So the *Roosevelt* now placed herself about a quarter of a mile to windward, and the result of her plentiful outpouring over the waves was most noticeable ; this, notwithstanding that the west wind was force ten—that is to say, of a velocity exceeding sixty miles an hour. The seas were running very high, the big ship was hove-to, but rolling as much as thirty-five degrees, and even shipping water over her forward and after decks. And whilst she waited patiently the overcast weather seemed to become worse with hail and snow-squalls.

Night settled down over that wild watery waste, and one must think of Captain Fried's own risk in standing-by. A vessel with all that top-hamper makes considerable lee-way, and at slow speeds she is not handy. If once she were to drift down on to *Antinoe*, there would be the most disastrous smashing of steel-plates. No captain can do the impossible, and there have been cases lately—that of the White Star liner *Homeric* was one instance—where it was entirely impossible to effect rescue and folly to make the attempt. The big decision has to be made by the captain alone, himself responsible for the safety of his ship and passengers ; but it is one of the saddest and rarest of events when nature's fury denies him the privilege of doing his charitable duty. To lower boats during preposterous weather, and throw away men's lives when seaman-like prudence suggests otherwise, is a departure which no sane shipmaster can permit. And I can imagine few more tragic situations

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than that in which a brave, warm-hearted, yet wise officer, with full knowledge and appreciation of the existing circumstances, has to suffer silently the criticisms of armchair judges, who never handled a vessel in their lives.

Captain Fried had been keeping steerage way on his ship and manœuvring as requisite, but obviously he was at times steaming some distance away from *Antinoe*; and about nine o'clock that night, during a violent squall of hail and snow, the stricken vessel was lost sight of, the latter's lights having gone out and her wireless failed. Looking for a dumb paralytic ship through a wild night of snow-squalls and mountainous Atlantic seas with thick, murky weather at the best of intervals, and the *Roosevelt's* powerful searchlight unable to penetrate, is calculated to try any commander. Daylight came and noon followed, but still there was not a sight of the freighter. At three that afternoon, in consultation with Mr Ericksen, the navigating officer, Captain Fried, after allowing for drift and varying courses, decided that a course 135° (True) ought to be right; and after steaming thus for less than an hour *Antinoe* was sighted one point on the starboard bow. Now, if there is anything which a big-ship skipper fears it is lack of sea-room. But the conditions were almost desperate, and *Roosevelt* was now brought as near as two hundred yards to windward of her sister, and resumed distributing oil. At 4 p.m. there seemed to be a temporary lull in the storm, though the seas were running alarmingly high.

Here was the moment for the big decision. The long winter's night coming on, the possibility of losing *Antinoe* again before morning, the probability that she might even founder before then; there was all that, and yet here were such ugly white seas that made any consideration of boatwork so terribly risky. But over

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there was a hoist of signal flags from the poor cargo steamer making an urgent appeal for help in her agony. It was the cry of one seaman in trouble to another, who had already delayed nearly a day and a half on his lawful voyage. But there could be only one reply to that coloured bunting, and Captain Fried now determined to send a boat across. Lifeboat number five was selected, in charge of Chief Officer Robert B. Miller, with the following seven as his volunteer crew. The names of these men who willingly went into great danger are indicative of the sea brotherhood's cosmopolitanism. There were Uno Wertanen (master-at-arms), Ernest Heitman (bo'sun's mate), Morris Jacobowitz (master-at-arms) and the four A.B.'s—Johannes Bauer, Alex. Fugelsang, Cosmo Franelich and Sam Fisher.

Launching one of these lifeboats from the lofty deck of an Atlantic liner is always no easy matter, and you will generally find that after such accidents as collision or being torpedoed there is loss of life through some mishap with the boat gear. I have been aboard a crack liner when the men were lowering a boat from a sixty foot height and a careless seaman was allowing the rope to slip out of his hold. But for an officer's quickness in getting a half turn round a small bollard that boat would have shot its occupants into the sea. In *President Roosevelt* the conditions were more difficult still, but happily there was no accident in actual lowering, though scarcely had the boat kissed the water and cast off than there burst a vicious squall, so that before the crew could get clear a great sea threw her against the liner's steel side and hurled every man into the water.

Here followed a mighty struggle, but they were handicapped by the fuel oil, which got into their eyes, throats and stomachs, as it did in case of many a

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survivor at the Battle of Jutland. In spite of this, *Roosevelt's* men stuck to their contest, climbed in and began pulling down to the wreck. But in their weakened condition they could make little progress, and were ordered aboard the liner again, down whose side their shipmates dropped heaving-lines, ladders and life-belts. But, alas, Wertanen and Heitman were swept away by the angry waters. Heitman drifted under the liner's stern and was drowned. Wertanen hung on to the life-boat's stern and made a huge effort to steer so that she would pass under *Antinoe's* stern, and actually got within fifty feet of the latter, whose crew threw life-belts with lines bent on. Wertanen tried desperately to seize one—missed, and was swept away. *Roosevelt* then tried to find these men, but it was a hopeless task, and that night she was compelled to heave-to because of the immense mountainous waters. The brave boat's efforts, so far, had brought only tragedy. At four next morning the liner again got to windward ; at the British ship's urgent appeal for more oil complied, and when at daylight the American hoisted and lowered her ensign to half-mast in honour of the dead, *Antinoe* did the same. Thus two anxious but fruitless days had passed, and the weather, instead of taking off, was too bad to allow of another boat being lowered.

But this long sea drama could not continue indefinitely, and *Antinoe's* signals indicated how pressing was her need for immediate action ; Captain Fried will probably never find himself in a more terrible dilemma. At noon other tactics were begun, the intention being to get a line across, and thus the *Antinoe* could haul a lowered boat. By means of a special gun a line was fired, but every time the messenger line carried away near the projectile. Eleven rockets were then fired with similar failure. The well-known bit of seaman-ship was next tried of floating a cask down with a line

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attached, and this likewise didn't succeed. Such persistence of bad luck and disheartening failure, coupled with the perpetual vigilance to prevent *Roosevelt* from drifting on to the doomed wallowing *Antinoe*, were full measure added to an already tried captain anxious to carry out his difficult duty.

A second lifeboat was now lowered, but without crew, and allowed to drift near to the sinking ship's stern, yet *Antinoe's* men were in such a physically exhausted state that they were not able to jump overboard ; and then one untameable wave capsized the craft and she disappeared. Darkness and bad weather put an end to further attempts, and so that day passed, except that at 9.30 p.m. a third boat was being made ready, but again the conditions prevented. An hour after midnight began a series of efforts which show that, in the age of steam, expert seamanship is still alive, and no one but a real sailor could have taken his big ship so close to danger and handled her so daringly well. The third lifeboat having been launched, she was towed from the top of the after derrick post in a fine effort to get a line on the *Antinoe's* poop. This was no easy matter. It was tried three times, but finally the force of the sea snapped the line and the boat was lost. The weather to-day interfered so mightily that *Roosevelt* had to content herself with heaving-to near the *Antinoe* and just wait, whilst rolling very heavily in the swell, shipping water in spite of her high freeboard.

At daybreak a repetition of yesterday's tactics, in which Captain Fried towed a boat close to the freighter, failed because of the weather. There are some masters who might have felt that after losing two hands and three boats and spending three unprofitable days with no sign of the storm easing up, it was a case of submitting to the inevitable and admitting defeat ; and

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here one recognises Captain Fried's moral courage as greatly as his physical pluck. But the last resource had not yet been brought up, and among the passengers there happened to be Colonel Hearne, a ballistic expert of the United States Army, who suggested that long spiral springs be attached between the projectile and the line of that gun which had been used unsuccessfully. The colonel's idea was that the springs would relieve the heavy shock which the rope received when the projectile shot forth ; so springs were made by the chief engineer and worked excellently, the lines reaching the *Antinoe* after six attempts. By this means the fourth lifeboat was slacked away to her, but whilst the British crew were heaving-in and their rescue could almost be guaranteed, the chafing of the line against her rail parted this rope and thus the fourth boat went.

A daring attempt was resumed now of towing a boat from the after derrick post, steaming close to Captain Tose's vessel, and then luffing up alongside, leaving the lines for the crew to get hold ; but this scheme failed, inasmuch as the lines were dragged under *Antinoe's* bottom. The whole category of a seaman's devices had now been tried without the smallest avail, and then came the message that the British ship was leaking and listing worse than ever. In these circumstances there was only one thing to be done, and that was to resume those dangerous boat efforts. Since, therefore, at 4 p.m. the weather seemed inclined to moderate, the fifth lifeboat was got ready, whose crew consisted again of that gallant Chief Officer Miller, but the other volunteers consisted of the Fourth Officer, Frank M. Upton, the remaining six being not seamen at all, for Alfred Wall was store-keeper, Charles Diaz, Juan Araneda, Adolphe Roberts, John Hahn and Frank Roberts were firemen. But

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what matter ? It was the universal sea brotherhood at work, the most powerful confederation in the whole civilised world. Risk of being smashed up or drowned like Heitman and Wertanen ? Forget it !

At 7.20 that night *Roosevelt* had been manœuvred even as close as a hundred yards to windward, the boat was lowered successfully, and thus given a nice lee with the shortest possible distance to row ; the *Roosevelt*, of course, then steaming down to leeward of *Antinoe* so as to make it an easy passage for the boat down wind. Pulling three oars a side and with a sweep steering, the boat, after a difficult passage, got round *Antinoe's* lee side, but, amidships, the lee rail was underwater and the waves were breaking as if over a sunken beach. Miller accordingly took his boat alongside No. 1 hatch, where the freeboard was higher. But *Antinoe's* men, after their days and nights of expectant death and being thrown about by repeated buffetings, with the lack of a good meal, were now so exhausted that they were slow getting into that boat, which all the time was leaping, jumping, rolling and restlessly surging against the listed hull.

Already she was badly damaged, but a dozen fellows had been rescued. She ran down to the *Roosevelt*, whose side was covered with ladders, life-lines, cargo-nets ; and the crew had literally to be hauled up. In their weak, pitiful condition they were put to bed and given every attention. But now the weather had become so appalling that the crew were ordered out of the boat, whose bow had become crushed and hoisting-hooks broken. She was then cast adrift, and that was how the fifth boat was lost. There still remained thirteen men aboard *Antinoe*, but it was not till forty minutes after midnight that the sixth lifeboat was made ready, as the wind had dropped considerably, though the sea was just about as bad. This time there went

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ten volunteers, of whom five—Miller, Upton, Wall, Fugelsang and Fisher—had made the trip once, but this was to be Miller's third effort. And if ever grit deserved reward it was this chief officer. Besides these five there were in the boat the third officer, deck yeoman, engineers' messman and four A.B.'s. Who shall deny that with three officers and that mixed crew there is no such thing as universal fraternity?

There was a bright moonlight, which enabled the boat to get alongside the wreck more easily and with less risk, but it was not an occasion which you would choose for rowing about the Atlantic. The thirteen men were embarked, brought down to the *Roosevelt* and hauled up, but the boat was so damaged whilst alongside each ship that she, too, had to be cast adrift. Thus six of them had been lost.* But the *Roosevelt* had won through, and whilst *Antinoe's* men were being examined by the surgeon, the voyage to Europe was continued after having been delayed four full days. It had been a thrilling time for all and pleasant for none; even aboard *Roosevelt* she was so lively that the cooks were unable to do their work and the passengers had but curtailed menus. A certain amount of damage was done to the deck, several passengers and crew received minor injuries owing to the ship's excessive rolling whilst stopped or beam-on to the seas. As to ropes, practically all the small stuff had been used up, including two of the lifeboat falls.

Whilst *Roosevelt* steamed away from the wreck the barometer fell rapidly, the wind shifted to south-east. There was another heavy gale coming along, so this had been the last chance for taking off those twenty-five men. But this rescue over several days is one of

* One of these boats, during the first part of October 1926, was washed up on South Uist, one of the West Hebrides islands. She had thus drifted about 2000 miles in nine months.

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the finest sea epics of modern times, in which dogged pertinacity, refusal to be dismayed, stoic seamanship and individual courage brought about the one big result. Next to Captain Fried must be remembered Chief Officer Miller, who had charge of the boat every time, and the dead Uno Wertanen must be remembered with that deep respect we offer to any gallant brother ; for when every one had been thrown out of the boat he spent most of his strength in saving several of these his shipmates.

But best of all was the fact that the great tradition of the sea had received a further chapter in its golden book. No one realised this more than Captain Tose and his men. When *President Roosevelt* came into Plymouth Sound she was met by the Commander-in-Chief's barge, out of which stepped British naval officers to present official congratulations to Captain Fried. A tender came alongside and took off twenty-five men of *Antinoe* as Plymouth heard hearty cheers from grateful British sailormen. And then some few days later, whilst *President Roosevelt* was on her way back to America, the Board of Trade sent down their representative to Southampton ; there was a pleasant little ceremony on board, there were speech-making, renewed congratulations and awards. When the ship steamed into New York the reception was national and overwhelming, calculated to upset any brave simple sailor. But Captain Fried had been lucky, Captain Tose had been lucky, twenty-five men had been lucky ; for in that same unspeakable storm another British freighter, the *Laristan*, out in the Atlantic had been in similar trouble. To her aid had come a German liner *Bremen*, whose captain had tried hard to save life, but only six were rescued, and during the night *Laristan* went down with all other hands.

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Such then is the brotherhood of the sea, that unique solidarity of brave friendship always ready through all ages at all times in every ocean. Big ships, little ships, sail, steam or motor, man-o'-war or peaceful trader, it makes no difference. And in this staunch federation we have one of the grandest possessions which a world of strife and materialism and harsh competition is only too thankful to hand on through generation to generation.

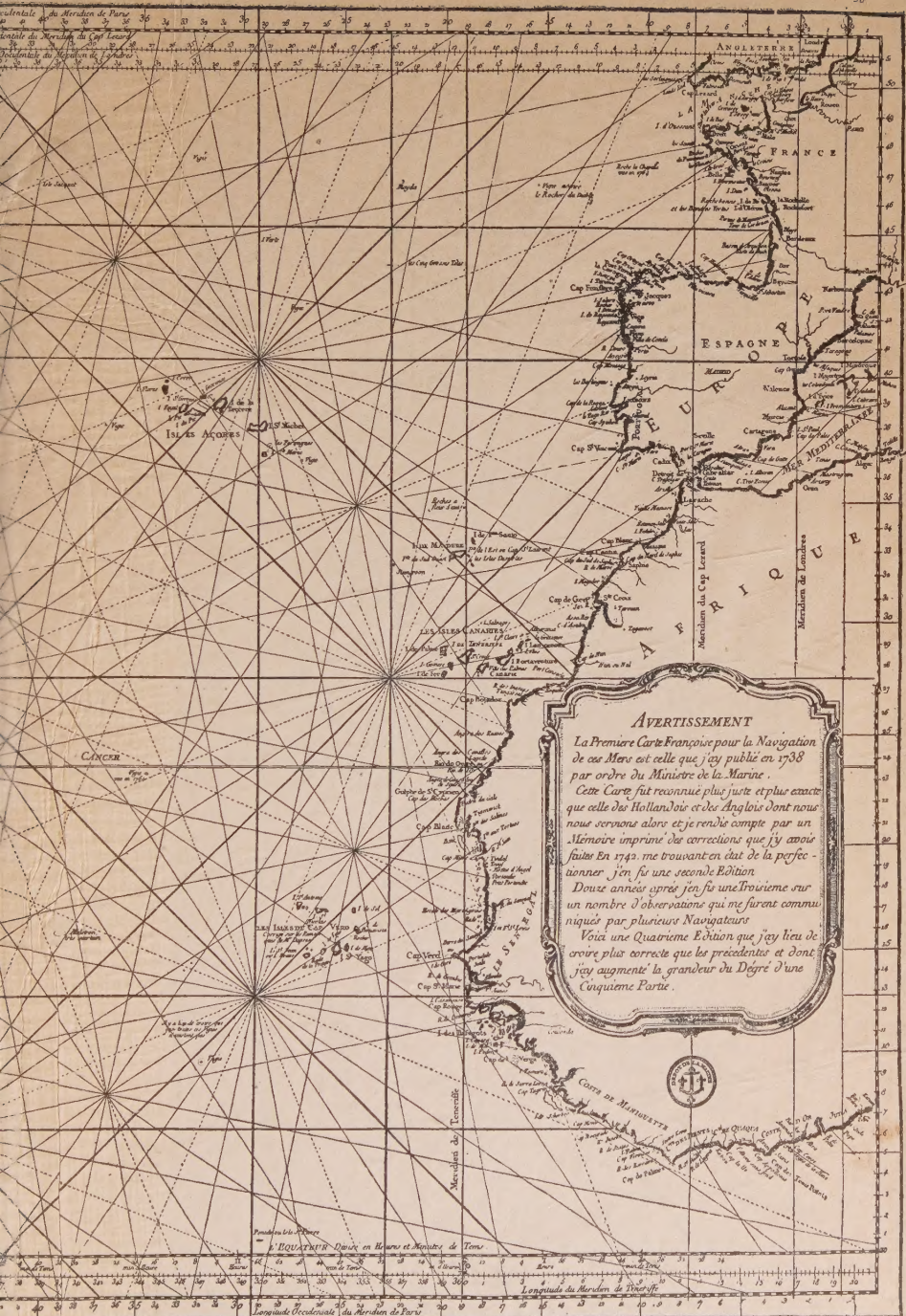
THE END.

Par le S^r Bellin Ingenieur de la Marine, Censeur Royal
de l'Académie de Marine et de la Société Royale, de Londres.

Quatrième Edition.

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Par l'Ordre du Ministre de la Marine et de la Marine de Tonnage

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